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THE WORKS

OF

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

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THE WORKS

OF

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

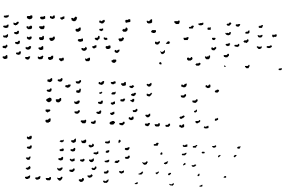
IN TWENTY-SIX VOLUMES

VOLUME XXIV

LOVEL THE WIDOWER

THE WOLVES AND THE LAMB

DENIS DUVAL



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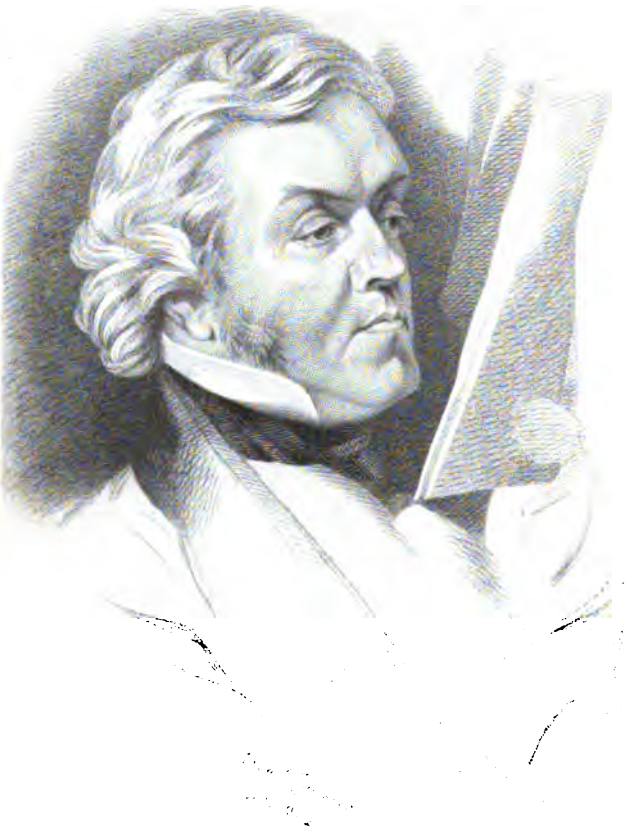

W. M. Thackeray

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LOVEL THE WIDOWER

THE WOLVES AND THE LAMB

DENIS DUVAL

BY

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

TO WHICH IS ADDED

AN ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS OF W. M. THACKERAY

BY LESLIE STEPHEN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BY THE AUTHOR AND FREDERICK WALKER

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LOVEL THE WIDOWER

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LOVEL THE WIDOWER.

CHAPTER I.

THE BACHELOR OF BEAK STREET.

WHO shall be the hero of this tale? Not I who write it. I am but the Chorus of the Play. I make remarks on the conduct of the characters: I narrate their simple story. There is love and marriage in it: there is grief and disappointment: the scene is in the parlour, and the region beneath the parlour. No: it may be the parlour and kitchen, in this instance, are on the same level. There is no high life, unless, to be sure, you call a baronet's widow a lady in high life; and some ladies may be, while some certainly are not. I don't think there's a villain in the whole performance. There is an

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abominable selfish old woman, certainly; an old highway robber; an old sponger on other people's kindness; an old haunter of Bath and Cheltenham boarding-houses (about which how can I know anything, never having been in a boarding-house at Bath or Cheltenham in my life?); an old swindler of tradesmen, tyrant of servants, bully of the poor—who, to be sure, might do duty for a villain, but she considers herself as virtuous a woman as ever was born. The heroine is not faultless (ah! that will be a great relief to some folk, for many writers' good women are, you know, so *very* insipid). The principal personage you may very likely think to be no better than a muff. But is many a respectable man of our acquaintance much better? and do muffs know that they are what they are, or, knowing it, are they unhappy? Do girls decline to marry one if he is rich? do we refuse to dine with one? I listened to one at church last Sunday, with all the women crying and sobbing; and, oh, dear me! how finely he preached! Don't we give him great credit for wisdom and eloquence in the House of Commons? Don't we give him important commands in the army? Can you, or can you not, point out one who has been made a peer? Doesn't your wife call one in the moment any of the children are ill? Don't we read his dear poems, or even novels? Yes; perhaps even this one is read and written by—Well! *Quid rides?* Do you mean that I am painting a portrait which hangs before me every morning in the looking-glass when I am shaving? *Après!* Do you suppose that I suppose that I have not infirmities like my neighbours? Am I weak? It is notorious to all my friends there is a certain dish I can't resist: no, not if I have already eaten twice too much at dinner. So, dear sir, or madam, have *you* your weakness—*your* irresistible dish of temptation? (or if you don't know it, your friends do). No, dear friend, the chances are that you and I are not people of the highest intellect, of the largest fortune, of the most ancient family, of the most consummate virtue, of the most faultless beauty in face and figure. We are no heroes nor angels; neither are we fiends from abodes unmentionable, black assassins, treacherous Iagos, familiar with stabbing and poison—murder our amusement, daggers

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our playthings, arsenic our daily bread, lies our conversation, and forgery our common handwriting. No, we are not monsters of crime, or angels walking the earth—at least I know *one* of us who isn't, as can be shown any day at home if the knife won't cut or the mutton comes up raw. But we are not altogether brutal and unkind, and a few folks like us. Our poetry is not as good as Alfred Tennyson's, but we can turn a couplet for Miss Fanny's album: our jokes are not always first-rate, but Mary and her mother smile very kindly when Papa tells his story or makes his pun. We have many weaknesses, but we are not ruffians of crime. No more was my friend Lovel. On the contrary, he was as harmless and kindly a fellow as ever lived when I first knew him. At present, with his changed position, he is, perhaps, rather *fine* (and certainly I am not asked to his *best* dinner-parties as I used to be, where you hardly see a commoner—but stay! I am advancing matters). At the time when this story begins, I say, Lovel had his faults—which of us has not? He had buried his wife, having notoriously been henpecked by her. How many men and brethren are like him! He had a good fortune—I wish I had as much—though I dare say many people are ten times as rich. He was a good-looking fellow enough; though that depends, ladies, upon whether you like a fair man or a dark one. He had a country house, but it was only at Putney. In fact, he was in business in the City, and being an hospitable man, and having three or four spare bedrooms, some of his friends were always welcome at Shrublands, especially after Mrs. Lovel's death, who liked me pretty well at the period of her early marriage with my friend, but got to dislike me at last and to show me the cold shoulder. That is a joint I never could like (though I have known fellows who persist in dining off it year after year, who cling hold of it, and refuse to be separated from it. I say, when Lovel's wife began to show me that she was tired of my company, I made myself scarce: used to pretend to be engaged when Fred faintly asked me to Shrublands; to accept his meek apologies, proposals to dine *en garçon* at Greenwich, the club, and so forth; and never visit upon him my wrath at his wife's indifference—for, after all, he had been my friend at

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many a pinch: he never stinted at "Hart's" or "Lovegrove's," and always made a point of having the wine I liked, never mind what the price was. As for his wife, there was, assuredly, no love lost between us—I thought her a lean, scraggy, lackadaisical, egotistical, consequential, insipid creature; and as for his mother-in-law, who stayed at Fred's as long and as often as her daughter would endure her, has any one who ever knew that notorious old Lady Baker at Bath, at Cheltenham, at Brighton,—wherever trumps and frumps were found together; wherever scandal was cackled; wherever fly-blown reputations were assembled, and dowagers with damaged titles trod over each other for the *pas*;—who, I say, ever had a good word for that old woman? What party was not bored where she appeared? What tradesman was not done with whom she dealt? I wish with all my heart I was about to narrate a story with a good mother-in-law for a character; but then you know, my dear madam, all good women in novels are insipid. This woman certainly was not. She was not only not insipid, but exceedingly bad-tasted. She had a foul loud tongue, a stupid head, a bad temper, an immense pride and arrogance, an extravagant son, and very little money. Can I say much more of a woman than this? Aha! my good Lady Baker! I was a *mauvais sujet*, was I?—I was leading Fred into smoking, drinking, and low bachelor habits, was I? I, his old friend, who have borrowed money from him any time these twenty years, was not fit company for you and your precious daughter? Indeed! *I* paid the money I borrowed from him like a man; but did *you* ever pay him, I should like to know? When Mrs. Lovel was in the first column of the *Times*, *then* Fred and I used to go off to Greenwich and Blackwall, as I said; then his kind old heart was allowed to feel for his friend; *then* we could have the other bottle of claret without the appearance of Bedford and the coffee, which in Mrs. L.'s time used to be sent in to us before we could ring for a second bottle, although she and Lady Baker had had three glasses each out of the first. Three full glasses each, I give you my word! No, madam, it was your turn to bully me once—now it is mine and I use it. No, you old catamaran, though you pretend you never

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read novels, some of your confounded good-natured friends will let you know of *this* one. Here you are, do you hear? Here you shall be shown up. And so I intend to show up *other* women and *other* men who have offended me. Is one to be subject to slights and scorn, and not have revenge? Kindnesses are easily forgotten; but injuries!—what worthy man does not keep *those* in mind?

Before entering upon the present narrative, may I take leave to inform a candid public that, though it is all true, there is not a word of truth in it; that though Lovel is alive and prosperous, and you very likely have met him, yet I defy you to point him out; that his wife (for he is Lovel the Widower no more) is not the lady you imagine her to be, when you say (as you will persist in doing), "Oh, that character is intended for Mrs. Thingamy, or was notoriously drawn from Lady So-and-So." No. You are utterly mistaken. Why, even the advertising puffers have almost given up that stale stratagem of announcing "REVELATIONS FROM HIGH LIFE.—The *beau monde* will be startled at recognising the portraits of some of its brilliant leaders in Miss Wiggins's forthcoming *roman de société*." Or, "We suspect a certain ducal house will be puzzled to guess how the pitiless author of 'Mayfair Mysteries' has become acquainted with (and exposed with a fearless hand) *certain family secrets* which were thought only to be known to a few of the very highest members of the aristocracy." No, I say; these silly baits to catch an unsuspecting public shall not be our arts. If you choose to occupy yourself with trying to ascertain if a certain cap fits one amongst ever so many thousand heads, you *may* possibly pop it on the right one: but the cap-maker will perish before he tells you; unless, of course, he has some private pique to avenge, or malice to wreak, upon some individual who can't by any possibility hit again;—*then*, indeed, he will come boldly forward and seize upon his victim—(a bishop, say, or a woman without coarse quarrelsome male relatives, will be best)—and clap on him, or her, such a cap, with such ears, that all the world shall laugh at the poor wretch, shuddering and blushing beetroot red, and whimpering deserved tears of rage and vexation at being made the common butt of society.

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Besides, I dine at Lovel's still; his company and cuisine are amongst the best in London. If they suspected I was taking them off, he and his wife would leave off inviting me. Would any man of a generous disposition lose such a valued friend for a joke, or be so foolish as to show him up in a story? All persons with a decent knowledge of the world will at once banish the thought, as not merely base, but absurd. I am invited to his house one day next week: *vous concevez* I can't mention the very day, for then he would find me out—and of course there would be no more cards for his old friend. He would not like appearing, as it must be owned he does in this memoir, as a man of not very strong mind. He believes himself to be a most determined, resolute person. He is quick in speech, wears a fierce beard, speaks with asperity to his servants (who liken him to a—to that before-named sable or ermine contrivance, in which ladies insert their hands in winter), and takes his wife to task so smartly, that I believe she believes he believes he is the master of the house. "Elizabeth, my love, he must mean A, or B, or D," I fancy I hear Lovel say; and she says, "Yes; oh! it is certainly D—his very image!" "D to a T," says Lovel (who is a neat wit). *She* may know that I mean to depict her husband in the above unpretending lines: but she will never let me know of her knowledge except by a little extra courtesy; except (may I make this pleasing exception?) by a few more invitations; except by a look of those unfathomable eyes (gracious goodness! to think she wore spectacles ever so long, and put a lid over them as it were!), into which, when you gaze sometimes, you may gaze so deep, and deep, and deep, that I defy you to plump half-way down into their mystery.

When I was a young man, I had lodgings in Beak Street, Regent Street (I no more have lived in Beak Street than in Belgrave Square: but I choose to say so, and no gentleman will be so rude as to contradict another)—I had lodgings, I say, in Beak Street, Regent Street. Mrs. Prior was the landlady's name. She had seen better days—landladies frequently have. Her husband—he could not be called the landlord, for Mrs. P. was manager of the place—had been, in happier times, captain or lieutenant in the militia; then of Diss,

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in Norfolk, of no profession; then of Norwich Castle, a prisoner for debt; then of Southampton Buildings, London, law-writer; then of the Bom-Retiro Caçadores, in the service of H.M. the Queen of Portugal, lieutenant and paymaster; then of Melina Place, Saint George's Fields, &c.—I forbear to give the particulars of an existence which a legal biographer has traced step by step, and which has more than once been the subject of judicial investigation by certain commissioners in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Well, Prior, at this time, swimming out of a hundred shipwrecks, had clambered on to a lighter, as it were, and was clerk to a coal-merchant, by the river-side. "You conceive, sir," he would say, "my employment is only temporary—the fortune of war, the fortune of war!" He smattered words in not a few foreign languages. His person was profusely scented with tobacco. Bearded individuals, padding the muddy hoof in the neighbouring Regent Street, would call sometimes of an evening, and ask for "the Captain." He was known at many neighbouring billiard-tables, and, I imagine, not respected. You will not see enough of Captain Prior to be very weary of him and his coarse swagger, to be disgusted by his repeated requests for small money-loans, or to deplore his loss, which you will please to suppose has happened before the curtain of our present drama draws up. I think two people in the world were sorry for him: his wife, who still loved the memory of the handsome young man who had wooed and won her; his daughter Elizabeth, whom for the last few months of his life, and up to his fatal illness, he every evening conducted to what he called her "Academy." You are right. Elizabeth is the principal character in this story. When I knew her, a thin freckled girl of fifteen, with a lean frock, and hair of a reddish hue, she used to borrow my books, and play on the First Floor's piano, when he was from home—Slumley his name was. He was editor of the *Swell*, a newspaper then published; author of a great number of popular songs, a friend of several music-selling houses; and it was by Mr. Slumley's interest that Elizabeth was received as a pupil at what the family called "the Academy."

Captain Prior then used to conduct his girl to the Academy,

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but she often had to conduct him home again. Having to wait about the premises for two, or three, or five hours sometimes, whilst Elizabeth was doing her lessons, he would naturally desire to shelter himself from the cold at some neighbouring house of entertainment. Every Friday, a prize of a golden medal, nay, I believe sometimes of twenty-five silver medals, was awarded to Miss Bellenden and other young ladies for their good conduct and assiduity at this Academy. Miss Bellenden gave her gold medal to her mother, only keeping five shillings for herself, with which the poor child bought gloves, shoes, and her humble articles of millinery.

Once or twice the Captain succeeded in intercepting that piece of gold, and I dare say treated some of his whiskered friends, the clinking trampers of the Quadrant pavement. He was a free-handed fellow when he had anybody's money in his pocket. It was owing to differences regarding the settlement of accounts that he quarrelled with the coal-merchant, his very last employer. Bessy, after yielding once or twice to his importunity, and trying to believe his solemn promises of repayment, had strength of mind to refuse her father the pound which he would have taken. Her five shillings—her poor little slender pocket-money, the representative of her charities and kindnesses to the little brothers and sisters, of her little toilette ornaments, nay necessities; of those well-mended gloves, of those oft-darned stockings, of those poor boots, which had to walk many a weary mile after midnight; of those little knicknacks, in the shape of brooch or bracelet, with which the poor child adorned her homely robe or sleeve—her poor five shillings, out of which Mary sometimes found a pair of shoes, or Tommy a flannel-jacket, and little Bill a coach and horse—this wretched sum, this mite, which Bessy administered among so many poor—I very much fear her father sometimes confiscated. I charged the child with the fact, and she could not deny me. I vowed a tremendous vow, that if ever I heard of her giving Prior money again, I would quit the lodgings, and never give those children lollipop, nor pegtop, nor sixpence; nor the pungent marmalade, nor the biting gingerbread-nut, nor the theatre characters, nor the paint-box to illuminate the same; nor the discarded

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clothes, which became smaller clothes upon the persons of little Tommy and little Bill, for whom Mrs. Prior, and Bessy, and the little maid, cut, clipped, altered, ironed, darned, mangled, with the greatest ingenuity. I say, considering what had passed between me and the Priors—considering those money transactions, and those clothes, and my kindness to the children—it was rather hard that my jam-pots were poached, and my brandy-bottles leaked. And then to frighten her brother with the story of the inexorable creditor—oh, Mrs. Prior!—oh, fie, Mrs. P.!

So Bessy went to her school in a shabby shawl, a faded bonnet, and a poor little lean dress flounced with the mud and dust of all weathers, whereas there were some other young ladies, fellow-pupils of hers, who laid out their gold medals to much greater advantage. Miss Delamere, with her eighteen shillings a week (calling them "*silver medals*" was only my wit, you see), had twenty new bonnets, silk and satin dresses for all seasons, feathers in abundance, swansdown muffs and tippets, lovely pocket-handkerchiefs and trinkets, and many and many a half-crown mould of jelly, bottle of sherry, blanket, or what not, for a poor fellow-pupil in distress; and as for Miss Montanville, who had exactly the same sal—well, who had a scholarship of exactly the same value, viz. about fifty pounds yearly—she kept an elegant little cottage in the Regent's Park, a brougham with a horse all over brass harness, and a groom with a prodigious gold lace hat-band, who was treated with frightful contumely at the neighbouring cabstand; an aunt or a mother, I don't know which (I hope it was only an aunt), always comfortably dressed, and who looked after Montanville; and she herself had bracelets, brooches, and velvet pelisses of the very richest description. But then Miss Montanville was a good economist. *She* was never known to help a poor friend in distress, or give a fainting brother and sister a crust or a glass of wine. She allowed ten shillings a week to her father, whose name was Boskinson, said to be a clerk to a chapel in Paddington; but she would never see him,—no, not when he was in hospital, where he was so ill; and though she certainly lent Miss Wilder thirteen pounds, she had Wilder arrested upon her promissory note for twenty-four, and sold up every stick

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of Wilder's furniture, so that the whole Academy cried shame! Well, an accident occurred to Miss Montanville, for which those may be sorry who choose. On the evening of the 26th of December, eighteen hundred and something, when the conductors of the Academy were giving their grand Annual Christmas Pant—I should say examination of the Academy pupils before their numerous friends—Montanville, who happened to be present, not in her brougham this time, but in an aërial chariot of splendour drawn by doves, fell off a rainbow, and through the roof of the Revolving Shrine of the Amaranthine Queen, thereby very nearly damaging Bellenden, who was occupying the shrine attired in a light-blue spangled dress, waving a wand, and uttering some idiotic verses composed for her by the Professor of Literature attached to the Academy. As for Montanville, let her go shrieking down that trap-door, break her leg, be taken home, and never more be character of ours. She never could speak. Her voice was as hoarse as a fishwoman's. Can that immense stout old box-keeper at the —— Theatre, who limps up to ladies on the first tier, and offers that horrible footstool, which everybody stumbles over, and makes a clumsy curtsey, and looks so knowing and hard, as if she recognised an acquaintance in the splendid lady who enters the box—can that old female be the once brilliant Emily Montanville? I am told there are *no* lady box-keepers in the English theatres. This, I submit, is a proof of my consummate care and artifice in rescuing from a prurient curiosity the individual personages from whom the characters of the present story are taken. Montanville is *not* a box-opener. She *may*, under another name, keep a trinket-shop in the Burlington Arcade, for what you know: but this secret no torture shall induce me to divulge. Life has its rises and its downfalls, and you have had yours, you hobbling old creature. Montanville, indeed! Go thy ways! Here is a shilling for thee. (Thank you, sir.) Take away that confounded footstool, and never let us see thee more!

Now the fairy Amarantha was like a certain dear young lady of whom we have read in early youth. Up to twelve o'clock, attired in sparkling raiment, she leads the dance with the prince (Gradini, known as Grady in his days of banishment

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at the T. R. Dublin). At supper, she takes her place by the prince's royal father (who is alive now, and still reigns occasionally, so that we will not mention his revered name). She makes believe to drink from the gilded pasteboard, and to eat of the mighty pudding. She smiles as the good old irascible monarch knocks the prime minister and the cooks about: she blazes in splendour: she beams with a thousand jewels, in comparison with which the Koh-i-noor is a wretched lustreless little pebble: she disappears in a chariot, such as a Lord Mayor never rode in:—and at midnight, who is that young woman tripping homeward through the wet streets in a battered bonnet, a cotton shawl, and a lean frock fringed with the dreary winter flounces?

Our Cinderella is up early in the morning: she does no little portion of the house-work: she dresses her sisters and brothers: she prepares papa's breakfast. On days when she has not to go to morning lessons at her Academy, she helps with the dinner. Heaven help us! She has often brought mine when I have dined at home, and owns to having made that famous mutton-broth when I had a cold. Foreigners come to the house—professional gentlemen—to see Slumley on the first floor: exiled captains of Spain and Portugal, companions of the warrior her father. It is surprising how she has learned their accents, and has picked up French, and Italian too. And she played the piano in Mr. Slumley's room sometimes, as I have said; but refrained from that presently, and from visiting him altogether. I suspect he was not a man of principle. His Paper used to make direful attacks upon individual reputations; and you would find theatre and opera people most curiously praised and assaulted in the *Swell*. I recollect meeting him, several years after, in the lobby of the Opera, in a very noisy frame of mind, when he heard a certain lady's carriage called, and cried out with exceeding strong language, which need not be accurately reported, "Look at that woman! Confound her! I made her, sir! Got her an engagement when the family was starving, sir! Did you see her, sir? She wouldn't even look at me!" Nor indeed was Mr. S. at that moment a very agreeable object to behold.

Then I remembered that there had been some quarrel with

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this man, when we lodged in Beak Street together. If difficulty there was, it was solved *ambulando*. He quitted the lodgings, leaving an excellent and costly piano as security for a heavy bill which he owed to Mrs. Prior, and the instrument was presently fetched away by the music-sellers, its owners. But regarding Mr. S——'s valuable biography, let us speak very gently. You see it is "an insult to literature" to say that there are disreputable and dishonest persons who write in newspapers.

Nothing, dear friend, escapes your penetration: if a joke is made in your company, you are down upon it instanter, and your smile rewards the wag who amuses you: so you knew at once, whilst I was talking of Elizabeth and her Academy, that a theatre was meant, where the poor child danced for a guinea or five-and-twenty shillings per week. Nay, she must have had not a little skill and merit to advance to the quarter of a hundred; for she was not pretty at this time, only a rough tawny-haired filly of a girl, with great eyes. Dolphin, the manager, did not think much of her, and she passed before him in his regiment of Sea-nymphs, or Bayadères, or Fairies, or Mazurka maidens (with their fluttering lances and little scarlet slyboots!) scarcely more noticed than private Jones standing under arms in his company when His Royal Highness the Field-Marshal gallops by. There were no dramatic triumphs for Miss Bellenden: no bouquets were flung at her feet: no cunning Mephistopheles—the emissary of some philandering Faustus outside—corrupted her duenna, or brought her caskets of diamonds. Had there been any such admirer for Bellenden, Dolphin would not only not have been shocked, but he would very likely have raised her salary. As it was, though himself, I fear, a person of loose morals, he respected better things. 'That Bellenden's a good hhonest gurl," he said to the present writer: "works hard: gives her money to her family: father a shy old cove. Very good family I hear they are!" and he passes on to some other of the innumerable subjects which engage a manager.

Now, why should a poor lodging-house keeper make such a mighty secret of having a daughter earning an honest guinea by dancing at a theatre? Why persist in calling the theatre an Academy? Why did Mrs. Prior speak of it as such, to me

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who knew what the truth was, and to whom Elizabeth herself made no mystery of her calling?

There are actions and events in its life over which decent Poverty often chooses to cast a veil that is not unbecoming to wear. We can all, if we are minded, peer through this poor flimsy screen: often there is no shame behind it:—only empty platters, poor scraps, and other threadbare evidence of want and cold. And who is called on to show his rags to the public, and cry out his hunger in the street? At this time (her character has developed itself not so amiably since), Mrs. Prior was outwardly respectable; and yet, as I have said, my groceries were consumed with remarkable rapidity; my wine and brandy-bottles were all leaky, until they were excluded from air under a patent lock;—my Morel's raspberry-jam, of which I was passionately fond, if exposed on the table for a few hours, was always eaten by the cat, or that wonderful little wretch of a maid-of-all-work, so active, yet so patient, so kind, so dirty, so obliging. Was it *the maid* who took those groceries? I have seen the "Gazza Ladra," and know that poor little maids are sometimes wrongfully accused; and besides, in my particular case, I own I don't care who the culprit was. At the year's end, a single man is not much poorer for this house-tax which he pays. One Sunday evening, being confined with a cold, and partaking of that mutton-broth which Elizabeth made so well, and which she brought me, I entreated her to bring from the cupboard, of which I gave her the key, a certain brandy-bottle. She saw my face when I looked at her: there was no mistaking its agony. There was scarce any brandy left: it had all leaked away: and it was Sunday, and no good brandy was to be bought that evening.

Elizabeth, I say, saw my grief. She put down the bottle, and she cried: she tried to prevent herself from doing so at first, but she fairly burst into tears.

"My dear,—dear child," says I, seizing her hand, "you don't suppose I fancy you——"

"No—no!" she says, drawing the large hand over her eyes. "No—no! but I saw it when you and Mr. Warrington last 'ad some. Oh! do have a patting lock!"

"A patent lock, my dear!" I remarked. "How odd that

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you, who have learned to pronounce Italian and French words so well, should make such strange slips in English! Your mother speaks well enough."

"She was born a lady. She was not sent to be a milliner's girl, as I was, and then among those noisy girls at that—oh! that *place*!" cries Bessy, in a sort of desperation, clenching her hand.

Here the bells of Saint Beak's began to ring quite cheerily for evening service. I heard "Elizabeth!" cried out from the lower regions by Mrs. Prior's cracked voice. And the maiden went her way to church, which she and her mother never missed of a Sunday; and I dare say I slept just as well without the brandy-and-water.

Slumley being gone, Mrs. Prior came to me rather wistfully one day, and wanted to know whether I would object to Madame Bentivoglio, the opera-singer, having the first floor? This was too much, indeed! How was my work to go on with that woman practising all day and roaring underneath me? But, after sending away so good a customer, I could not refuse to lend the Priors a little more money; and Prior insisted upon treating me to a new stamp, and making out a new and handsome bill for an amount nearly twice as great as the last: which he had no doubt under Heaven, and which he pledged his honour as an officer and a gentleman, that he would meet. Let me see: That was how many years ago?—Thirteen, fourteen, twenty? Never mind. My fair Elizabeth, I think if you saw your poor old father's signature now, you would pay it. I came upon it lately in an old box I haven't opened these fifteen years, along with some letters, written—never mind by whom—and an old glove that I used to set an absurd value by; and that emerald-green tabinet waistcoat which kind old Mrs. Macmanus gave me, and which I wore at the L—d L—t—nt's ball, Ph–n–x Park, Dublin, once, when I danced with *her* there! Lord!—Lord! It would no more meet round my waist now than round Daniel Lambert's. How we outgrow things!

But as I never presented this united bill of 43*l.* odd (the first portion of 23*l.*, &c. was advanced by me in order to pay an execution out of the house)—as I never expected to have it paid any more than I did to be Lord Mayor of London,—I say

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it was a little hard that Mrs. Prior should write off to her brother (she writes a capital letter), blessing Providence that had given him a noble income, promising him the benefit of her prayers, in order that he should long live to enjoy his large salary, and informing him that an obdurate creditor, who shall be nameless (meaning me), who had Captain Prior *in his power* (as if, being in possession of that dingy scrawl, I should have known what to do with it), who held Mr. Prior's acceptance for 43*l.* 14*s.* 4*d.* due on the 3rd July (my bill), would infallibly bring their family to RUIN, unless a part of the money was paid up. When I went up to my old College, and called on Sargent, at Boniface Lodge, he treated me as civilly as if I had been an undergraduate; scarcely spoke to me in hall, where, of course, I dined at the Fellows' table; and only asked me to one of Mrs. Sargent's confounded tea-parties during the whole time of my stay. Now it was by this man's entreaty that I went to lodge at Prior's; he talked to me after dinner one day, he hummed, he ha'd, he blushed, he prated in his pompous way, about an unfortunate sister in London—fatal early marriage —husband, Captain Prior, Knight of the Swan with Two Necks of Portugal, most distinguished officer, but imprudent speculator—advantageous lodgings in the centre of London, quiet, though near the Clubs—if I was ill (I am a confirmed invalid), Mrs. Prior, his sister, would nurse me like a mother. So, in a word, I went to Prior's: I took the rooms: I was attracted by some children: Amelia Jane (that little dirty maid before mentioned) dragging a go-cart, containing a little dirty pair; another marching by them, carrying a fourth well-nigh as big as himself. These little folks, having threaded the mighty flood of Regent Street, debouched into the quiet creek of Beak Street, just as I happened to follow them. And the door at which the small caravan halted,—the very door I was in search of,—was opened by Elizabeth, then only just emerging from childhood, with tawny hair falling into her solemn eyes.

The aspect of these little people, which would have deterred many, happened to attract me. I am a lonely man. I may have been ill-treated by someone once, but that is neither here nor there. If I had had children of my own, I think I

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should have been good to them. I thought Prior a dreadful vulgar wretch, and his wife a scheming, greedy little woman. But the children amused me: and I took the rooms, liking to hear overhead in the morning the patter of their little feet. The person I mean has several;—husband, judge in the West Indies. *Allons!* now you know how I came to live at Mrs. Prior's.

Though I am now a steady, a *confirmed* old bachelor (I shall call myself Mr. Batchelor, if you please, in this story; and there is someone far—far away who knows why I will NEVER take another title), I was a gay young fellow enough once. I was not above the pleasures of youth: in fact, I learned quadrilles on purpose to dance with her that long vacation when I went to read with my young friend, Lord Viscount Poldoody, at Dub—psha! Be still, thou foolish heart! Perhaps I misspent my time as an undergraduate. Perhaps I read too many novels, occupied myself too much with "elegant literature" (that used to be our phrase), and spoke too often at the Union, where I had a considerable reputation. But those fine words got me no College prizes: I missed my fellowship: was rather in disgrace with my relations afterwards, but had a small independence of my own, which I eked out by taking a few pupils for little-goes and the common degree. At length, a relation dying, and leaving me a further small income, I left the University, and came to reside in London.

Now in my third year at College, there came to Saint Boniface a young gentleman, who was one of the few gentlemen-pensioners of our society. His popularity speedily was great. A kindly and simple youth, he would have been liked, I dare say, even though he had been no richer than the rest of us; but this is certain, that flattery, worldliness, mammon worship, are vices as well known to young as to old boys; and a rich lad at school or college has his followers, tuft-hunters, led-captains, little courts, just as much as any elderly millionaire of Pall Mall, who gazes round his Club to see whom he shall take home to dinner, while humble trencher-men wait anxiously, thinking—Ah! will he take me this time? or will he ask that abominable sneak and toady Henchman again? Well

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—well! this is an old story about parasites and flatterers. My dear good sir, I am not for a moment going to say that *you* ever were one; and I dare say it was very base and mean of us to like a man chiefly on account of his money. "I know" —Fred Lovel used to say—"I know fellows come to my rooms because I have a large allowance, and plenty of my poor old governor's wine, and give good dinners: I am not deceived; but, at least, it is pleasanter to come to me and have good dinners, and good wine, than to go to Jack Highson's dreary tea and turnout, or to Ned Roper's abominable Oxbridge port." And so I admit at once that Lovel's parties *were* more agreeable than most men's in the College. Perhaps the goodness of the fare, by pleasing the guests, made them more pleasant. A dinner in hall and a pewter plate is all very well, and I can say grace before it with all my heart; but a dinner with fish from London, game, and two or three nice little *entrées*, is better—and there was no better cook in the University than ours at Saint Boniface, and ah me! there were appetites then, and digestions which rendered the good dinner doubly good.

Between me and young Lovel a friendship sprang up, which, I trust, even the publication of this story will not diminish. There is a period, immediately after the taking of his bachelor's degree, when many a University-man finds himself embarrassed. The tradesmen rather rudely press for a settlement of their accounts. Those prints we ordered *calidi juventâ*; those shirt-studs and pins which the jewellers would persist in thrusting into our artless bosoms; those fine coats we would insist on having for our books, as well as ourselves; all these have to be paid for by the graduate. And my father, who was then alive, refusing to meet these demands, under the —I own—just plea, that my allowance had been ample, and that my half-sisters ought not to be mulcted of their slender portions in consequence of my extravagance, I should have been subject to very serious inconvenience—nay, possibly, to personal incarceration—had not Lovel, at the risk of rustication, rushed up to London to his mother (who then had *especial reasons* for being very gracious with her son), obtained a supply of money from her, and brought it to me at Mr. Shackell's horrible hotel, where I was lodged. He had tears in his kind

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eyes; he grasped my hand a hundred and hundred times as he flung the notes into my lap; and the recording tutor (Sargent was only tutor then), who was going to bring him up before the master for breach of discipline, dashed away a drop from his own lid, when, with a moving eloquence, I told what had happened, and blotted out the transaction with some particular old 1811 port, of which we freely partook in his private rooms that evening. By laborious instalments, I had the happiness to pay Lovel back. I took pupils, as I said; I engaged in literary pursuits: I became connected with a literary periodical, and, I am ashamed to say, I imposed myself upon the public as a good classical scholar. I was not thought the less learned, when, my relative dying, I found myself in possession of a small independency; and my "Translations from the Greek," my "Poems by Beta," and my articles in the paper of which I was part proprietor for several years, have had their little success in their day.

Indeed at Oxbridge, if I did not obtain University honours, at least I showed literary tastes. I got the prize essay one year at Boniface, and plead guilty to having written essays, poems, and a tragedy. My College friends had a joke at my expense (a very small joke serves to amuse those port-wine-bibbing fogies, and keeps them laughing for ever so long a time)—they are welcome, I say, to make merry at my charges—in respect of a certain bargain which I made on coming to London, and in which, had I been Moses Primrose purchasing green spectacles, I could scarcely have been more taken in. *My* Jenkinson was an old College acquaintance, whom I was idiot enough to imagine a respectable man: the fellow had a very smooth tongue, and sleek sanctified exterior. He was rather a popular preacher, and used to cry a good deal in the pulpit. He, and a queer wine-merchant and bill-discounter, Sherrick by name, had somehow got possession of that neat little literary paper, the *Museum*, which, perhaps, you remember; and this eligible literary property my friend Honeyman, with his wheedling tongue, induced me to purchase. I bear no malice: the fellow is in India now, where I trust he pays his butcher and baker. He was in dreadful straits for money when he sold me the *Museum*. He began crying when

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I told him some short time afterwards that he was a swindler, and from behind his pocket-handkerchief sobbed a prayer that I should one day think better of him; whereas my remarks to the same effect produced an exactly contrary impression upon his accomplice, Sherrick, who burst out laughing in my face, and said, "The more fool you!" Mr. Sherrick was right. He was a fool, without mistake, who had any money-dealing with him; and poor Honeyman was right, too; I don't think so badly of him as I did. A fellow so hardly pinched for money could not resist the temptation of extracting it from such a greenhorn. I dare say I gave myself airs as editor of that confounded *Museum*, and proposed to educate the public taste, to diffuse morality and sound literature throughout the nation, and to pocket a liberal salary in return for my services. I dare say I printed my own sonnets, my own tragedy, my own verses (to a Being who shall be nameless, but whose conduct has caused a faithful heart to bleed not a little). I dare say I wrote satirical articles, in which I piqued myself upon the fineness of my wit, and criticisms, got up for the nonce out of encyclopædias and biographical dictionaries; so that I would be actually astounded at my own knowledge. I dare say I made a gaby of myself to the world: pray, my good friend, hast thou never done likewise? If thou hast never been a fool, be sure thou wilt never be a wise man.

I think it was my brilliant *confrère* on the first floor (he had pecuniary transactions with Sherrick, and visited two or three of Her Majesty's metropolitan prisons at that gentleman's suit) who first showed me how grievously I had been cheated in the newspaper matter. Slumley wrote for a paper printed at our office. The same boy often brought proofs to both of us—a little bit of a puny bright-eyed chap, who looked scarce twelve years old, when he was sixteen; who in wit was a man, when in stature he was a child,—like many other children of the poor.

This little Dick Bedford used to sit many hours asleep on my landing-place or Slumley's, whilst we were preparing our invaluable compositions within our respective apartments. S—— was a good-natured reprobate, and gave the child of his meat and his drink. I used to like to help the little man from

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my breakfast, and see him enjoy the meal. As he sat, with his bag on his knees, his head sunk in sleep, his little high-lows scarce reaching the floor, Dick made a touching little picture. The whole house was fond of him. The tipsy Captain nodded him a welcome as he swaggered downstairs, stock, and coat, and waistcoat in hand, to his worship's toilette in the back kitchen. The children and Dick were good friends; and Elizabeth patronised him, and talked with him now and again, in her grave way. You know Clancy the composer?—know him better, perhaps, under his name of Friedrich Donner? Donner used to write music to Slumley's words, or *vice versâ*; and would come now and again to Beak Street, where he and his poet would try their joint work at the piano. At the sound of that music, little Dick's eyes used to kindle. "Oh, it's prime!" said the young enthusiast. And I will say, that good-natured miscreant of a Slumley not only gave the child pence, but tickets for the play, concerts, and so forth. Dick had a neat little suit of clothes at home; his mother made him a very nice little waistcoat out of my undergraduate's gown, and he and she, a decent woman, when in their best raiment, looked respectable enough for any theatre-pit in England.

Amongst other places of public amusement which he attended, Mr. Dick frequented the Academy where Miss Bellenden danced, and whence poor Elizabeth Prior issued forth after midnight in her shabby frock. And once, the Captain, Elizabeth's father and protector, being unable to walk very accurately, and noisy and incoherent in his speech, so that the attention of Messieurs of the police was directed towards him, Dick came up, placed Elizabeth and her father in a cab, paid the fare with his own money, and brought the whole party home in triumph, himself sitting on the box of the vehicle. I chanced to be coming home myself (from one of Mrs. Wateringham's elegant tea *soirées*, in Dorset Square), and reached my door just at the arrival of Dick and his caravan. "Here, cabby!" says Dick, handing out the fare, and looking with his brightest eyes. It is pleasanter to look at that beaming little face, than at the Captain yonder, reeling into his house, supported by his daughter. Dick cried, Elizabeth told me,

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when, a week afterwards, she wanted to pay him back his shilling; and she said he was a strange child, that he was.

I revert to my friend Lovel. I was coaching Lovel for his degree (which, between ourselves, I think he never would have attained), when he suddenly announced to me, from Weymouth, where he was passing the vacation, his intention to quit the University, and to travel abroad. "Events have happened, dear friend," he wrote, "which will make my mother's home miserable to me (I little knew when I went to town about your business, what caused her *wonderful complaisance* to me). She would have broken my heart, Charles" (my Christian name is Charles), "but its wounds have found a *consoler!*"

Now, in this little chapter, there are some little mysteries propounded, upon which, were I not above any such artifice, I might easily leave the reader to ponder for a month.

1. Why did Mrs. Prior, at the lodgings, persist in calling the theatre at which her daughter danced the Academy?

2. What were the special reasons why Mrs. Lovel should be very gracious with her son, and give him 150*l.* as soon as he asked for the money?

3. Why was Fred Lovel's heart nearly broken? And—

4. Who was his consoler?

I answer these at once, and without the slightest attempt at delay or circumlocution. 1. Mrs. Prior, who had repeatedly received money from her brother, John Erasmus Sargent, D.D., Master of St. Boniface College, knew perfectly well that if the Master (whom she already pestered out of his life) heard that she had sent a niece of his on the stage, he would never give her another shilling.

2. The reason why Emma, widow of the late Adolphus Loeffel, of Whitechapel Road, sugar-baker, was so particularly gracious to her son, Adolphus Frederick Lovel, Esquire, of Saint Boniface College, Oxbridge, and principal partner in the house of Loeffel aforesaid, an infant, was that she, Emma, was about to contract a second marriage with the Reverend Samuel Bonnington.

3. Fred Lovel's heart was so very much broken by this intelligence, that he gave himself airs of Hamlet, dressed in

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black, wore his long fair hair over his eyes, and exhibited a hundred signs of grief and desperation; until—

4. Louisa (widow of the late Sir Popham Baker, of Bakerstown, county Kilkenny, Baronet) induced Mr. Lovel to take a trip on the Rhine with her and Cecilia, fourth and only unmarried daughter of the aforesaid Sir Popham Baker, deceased.

My opinion of Cecilia I have candidly given in a previous page. I adhere to that opinion. I shall not repeat it. The subject is disagreeable to me, as the woman herself was in life. What Fred found in her to admire I cannot tell: lucky for us all that tastes, men, women, vary. You will never see her alive in this history. That is her picture, painted by the late Mr. Gandish. She stands fingering that harp with which she has often driven me half mad with her "Tara's Halls" and her "Poor Marianne." She used to bully Fred so, and be so rude to his guests, that, in order to pacify her, he would meanly say, "Do, my love, let us have a little music!" and thrumpty—thrumpty, off would go her gloves, and "Tara's Halls" would begin. "The harp that *once*," indeed! the accursed catgut scarce knew any other music, and "once" was a hundred times at least in *my* hearing. Then came the period when I was treated to the cold joint which I have mentioned; and, not liking it, I gave up going to Shrublands.

So, too, did my Lady Baker, but not of *her own free will*, mind you. *She* did not quit the premises because her reception was too cold, but because the house was made a great deal too hot for her. I remember Fred coming to me in high spirits, and describing to me, with no little humour, a great battle between Cecilia and Lady Baker, and her Ladyship's defeat and flight. She fled, however, only as far as Putney village, where she formed again, as it were, and fortified herself in a lodging. Next day she made a desperate but feeble attack, presenting herself at Shrublands lodge-gate, and threatening that she and sorrow would sit down before it; and that all the world should know how a daughter treated her mother. But the gate was locked, and Barnet, the gardener, appeared behind it, saying, "Since you *are* come, my Lady, perhaps you will pay my missis the four-and-twenty shillings you borrowed of her." And he grinned at her

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through the bars, until she fled before him, cowering. Lovel paid the little forgotten account; the best four-and-twenty shillings he had ever laid out, he said.

Eight years passed away; during the last four of which I scarce saw my old friend, except at clubs and taverns, where we met privily, and renewed, not old warmth and hilarity, but old kindness. One winter he took his family abroad; Cecilia's health was delicate, Lovel told me, and the doctor had advised that she should spend a winter in the South. He did not stay with them: he had pressing affairs at home; he had embarked in many businesses besides the paternal sugar-bakery; was concerned in companies, a director of a joint-stock bank, a man in whose fire were many irons. A faithful governess was with the children; a faithful man and maid were in attendance on the invalid; and Lovel, adoring his wife, as he certainly did, yet supported her absence with great equanimity.

In the spring I was not a little scared to read amongst the deaths in the newspaper:—"At Naples, of scarlet fever, on the 25th ult., Cecilia, wife of Frederick Lovel, Esquire, and daughter of the late Sir Popham Baker, Baronet." I knew what my friend's grief would be. He had hurried abroad at the news of her illness; he did not reach Naples in time to receive the last words of his poor Cecilia.

Some months after the catastrophe, I had a note from Shrublands. Lovel wrote quite in the old affectionate tone. He begged his dear old friend to go to him, and console him in his solitude. Would I come to dinner that evening?

Of course I went off to him straightway. I found him in deep sables in the drawing-room with his children, and I confess I was not astonished to see my Lady Baker once more in that room.

"You seem surprised to see me here, Mr. Batchelor?" says her Ladyship, with that grace and good breeding which she generally exhibited; for if she accepted benefits, she took care to insult those from whom she received them.

"Indeed, no," said I, looking at Lovel, who piteously hung down his head. He had his little Cissy at his knee: he was sitting under the portrait of the defunct musician, whose harp, now muffled in leather, stood dimly in the corner of the room.

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"I am here not at my own wish, but from a feeling of duty towards that—departed—angel!" says Lady Baker, pointing to the picture.

"I am sure when Mamma was here, you were always quarrelling," says little Popham, with a scowl.

"This is the way those innocent children have been taught to regard me," cries Grandmamma.

"Silence, Pop," says Papa, "and don't be a rude boy."

"Isn't Pop a rude boy?" echoes Cissy.

"Silence, Pop," continues Papa, "or you must go up to Miss Prior."

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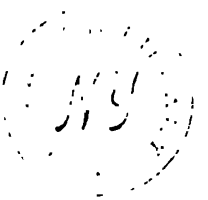
I AM REFERRED TO CECILIA.



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CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH MISS PRIOR IS KEPT AT THE DOOR.

F course we all know who she was, the Miss Prior of Shrublands, whom Papa and Grandmamma called to the unruly children. Years had passed since I had shaken the Beak Street dust off my feet. The brass plate of "Prior" was removed from the once familiar door, and screwed, for what I can tell, on to the late reprobate owner's coffin. A little eruption of mushroom-formed brass knobs I saw on the door-post when I passed by it last week, and CAFÉ DES AMBASSADEURS was thereon inscribed, with three fly-blown blue teacups, a couple

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of coffee-pots of the well-known Britannia metal, and two freckled copies of the *Indépendance Belge* hanging over the window-blind. Were those their Excellencies the Ambassadors at the door, smoking cheroots? Pool and Billiards were written on their countenances, their hats, their elbows. They may have been ambassadors down on their luck, as the phrase is. They were in disgrace, no doubt, at the court of her imperial majesty Queen Fortune. Men as shabby have retrieved their disgraces ere now, washed their cloudy faces, strapped their dingy waistcoats with cordons, and stepped into fine carriages from quarters not a whit more reputable than the "Café des Ambassadeurs." If I lived in the Leicester Square neighbourhood, and kept a cafe, I would always treat foreigners with respect. They may be billiard-markers now, or doing a little shady police business; but why should they not afterwards be generals and great officers of state? Suppose that gentleman is at present a barber, with his tongs and stick of fixature for the moustaches, how do you know he has not his epaulettes and his *bâton de maréchal* in the same pouch? I see engraven on the second-floor bell, on my rooms, "Plugwell." Who can Plugwell be, whose feet now warm at the fire where I sat many a long evening? And this gentleman with the fur collar, the straggling beard, the frank and engaging leer, the somewhat husky voice, who is calling out on the doorstep, "Step in, and 'ave it done. Your correct likeness, only one shilling"—is he an ambassador too? Ah, no: he is only the *chargé-d'affaires* of a photographer who lives upstairs: no doubt where the little ones used to be. Bless me! Photography was an infant, and in the nursery, too, when *we* lived in Beak Street.

Shall I own that, for old times' sake, I went upstairs, and "'ad it done"—that correct likeness, price one shilling? Would Some One (I have said, I think, that the party in question is well married in a distant island) like to have the thing, I wonder, and be reminded of a man whom she knew in life's prime, with brown curly locks, as she looked on the effigy of this elderly gentleman, with a forehead as bare as a billiard-ball?

As I went up and down that darkling stair, the ghosts of

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the Prior children peeped out from the banisters; the little faces smiled in the twilight: it may be wounds (of the heart) throbbed and bled again,—oh, how freshly and keenly! How infernally I have suffered behind that door in that room—I mean that one where Plugwell now lives. Confound Plugwell! I wonder what that woman thinks of me as she sees me shaking my fist at the door? Do you think me mad, madam? I don't care if you do. Do you think when I spoke anon of the ghosts of Prior's children, I mean that any of them are dead? None are, that I know of. A great hulking Bluecoat-boy, with fluffy whiskers, spoke to me not long since, in an awful bass voice, and announced his name as "Gus Prior." And "How's Elizabeth?" he added, nodding his bullet head. Elizabeth, indeed, you great vulgar boy! Elizabeth,—and, by the way, how long we have been keeping her waiting!

You see, as I beheld her, a heap of memories struck upon me, and I could not help chattering; when of course—and you are perfectly right, only you might just as well have left the observation alone: for I knew quite well what you were going to say—when I had much better have held my tongue. Elizabeth means a history to me. She came to me at a critical period of my life. Bleeding and wounded from the conduct of that other individual (by her present name of Mrs. O'D—her present *O'D*-ous name—I say, I will never—never call her)—desperately wounded and miserable on my return from a neighbouring capital, I went back to my lodgings in Beak Street, and there there grew up a strange intimacy between me and my landlady's young daughter. I told her my story—indeed, I believe I told anybody who would listen. She seemed to compassionate me. She would come wistfully into my rooms, bringing me my gruel and things (I could scarcely bear to eat for a while after—after that affair to which I may have alluded before)—she used to come to me, and she used to pity me, and I used to tell her all, and to tell her over and over again. Days and days have I passed tearing my heart out in that second-floor room which answers to the name of Plugwell now. Afternoon after afternoon have I spent there, and poured out my story of love and wrong to Elizabeth, shown her that waistcoat I told you of—that glove

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(her hand wasn't so very small either)—her letters, those two or three vacuous, meaningless letters, with "My dear sir—Mamma hopes you will come to tea;" or, "If dear Mr. Batchelor *should* be riding in the Phœnix Park near the *Long Milestone*, about 2, my sister and I will be in the car, and," &c.; or, "Oh, you kind man! the tickets" (she called it *tickuts* —by heaven! she did) "were too welcome, and the *bouquays* too lovely" (this word, I saw, had been operated on with a penknife. I found no faults, not even in her spelling—then); or—never mind what more. But more of this *puling*, of this *humbug*, of this *bad spelling*, of this infernal jilting, swindling, heartless hypocrisy (all her mother's doing, I own; for until he *got his place*, my rival was not so well received as I was)—more of this RUBBISH, I say, I showed Elizabeth, and she pitied me!

She used to come to me day after day, and I used to talk to her. She used not to say much. Perhaps she did not listen; but I did not care for that. On—and on—and on I would go with my prate about my passion, my wrongs, and despair; and untiring as my complaints were, still more constant was my little hearer's compassion. Mamma's shrill voice would come to put an end to our conversation, and she would rise up with an "Oh, bother!" and go away: but the next day the good girl was sure to come to me again, when we would have another repetition of our tragedy.

I dare say you are beginning to suppose (what, after all, is a very common case, and certainly *no conjuror* is wanted to make the guess) that out of all this crying and sentimentality, which a soft-hearted old fool of a man poured out to a young girl—out of all this whimpering and pity, something which is said to be akin to pity might arise. But in this, my good madam, you are utterly wrong. Some people have the small-pox twice; *I do not*. In my case, if a heart is broke, it's broke: if a flower is withered, it's withered. If I choose to put my grief in a ridiculous light, why not? why do you suppose I am going to make a tragedy of such an old used-up, battered, stale, vulgar, trivial every-day subject as a jilt who plays with a man's passion, and laughs at him, and leaves him? Tragedy indeed! Oh, yes! poison—black-edged note-

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paper—Waterloo Bridge—one more unfortunate, and so forth! No: if she goes, let her go!—*si celeres quatit pennas*, I puff the what-d'ye-call-it away! But I'll have no *tragedy*, mind you.

Well, it must be confessed that a man desperately in love (as I fear I must own I then was, and a good deal cut up by Glorvina's conduct) is a most selfish being: whilst women are so soft and unselfish that they can forget or disguise their own sorrows for a while, whilst they minister to a friend in affliction. I did not see, though I talked with her daily, on my return from that accursed Dublin, that my little Elizabeth was pale and *distraite*, and sad, and silent. She would sit quite dumb whilst I chattered, her hands between her knees, or draw one of them over her eyes. She would say, "Oh, yes! Poor fellow—poor fellow!" now and again, as giving a melancholy confirmation of my dismal stories; but mostly she remained quiet, her head drooping towards the ground, a hand to her chin, her feet to the fender.

I was one day harping on the usual string. I was telling Elizabeth how, after presents had been accepted, after letters had passed between us (if her scrawl could be called letters, if my impassioned song could be so construed), after everything but the actual word had passed our lips—I was telling Elizabeth how, on one accursed day, Glorvina's mother greeted me on my arrival in M–rr–n Square by saying, "Dear, dear Mr. Batchelor, we look on you quite as one of the family! Congratulate me—congratulate my child! Dear Tom has got his appointment as Recorder of Tobago; and it is to be a match between him and his cousin Glory."

"His cousin *What?*" I shriek with a maniac laugh.

"My poor Glorvina! Sure the children have been fond of each other ever since they could speak. I knew your kind heart would be the first to rejoice in their happiness."

And so, say I—ending the story—I, who thought myself loved, was left without a pang of pity: I, who could mention a hundred reasons why I thought Glorvina well disposed to me, was told she regarded me as an *uncle*! Were her letters such as nieces write? Who ever heard of an uncle walking round Merrion Square for hours of a rainy night, and looking

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up to a bedroom window, because his *niece*, forsooth, was behind it? I had set my whole heart on the cast, and this was the return I got for it. For months she cajoles me—her eyes follow me, her cursed smiles welcome and fascinate me, and at a moment, at the beck of another—she laughs at me and leaves me!

At this, my little pale Elizabeth, still hanging down, cries, "Oh, the villain! the villain!" and sobs so that you might have thought her little heart would break.

"Nay," said I, "my dear, Mr. O'Dowd is no villain. His uncle, Sir Hector, was as gallant an old officer as any in the service. His aunt was a Molloy, of Molloystown, and they are of excellent family, though, I believe, of embarrassed circumstances; and young Tom——"

"*Tom?*" cries Elizabeth, with a pale bewildered look. "*His name wasn't Tom*, dear Mr. Batchelor; *his name was Woo-woo-illiam!*" and the tears begin again.

Ah, my child! my child! my poor young creature! and you, too, have felt the infernal stroke. You, too, have passed the tossing nights of pain—have heard the dreary hours toll—have looked at the cheerless sunrise with your blank sleepless eyes—have woke out of dreams, mayhap, in which the beloved one was smiling on you, whispering love-words—oh! how sweet and fondly remembered! What!—your heart has been robbed, too, and your treasury is rifled and empty!—poor girl! And I looked in that sad face, and saw no grief there! You could do your little sweet endeavour to soothe my wounded heart, and I never saw yours was bleeding! Did you suffer more than I did, my poor little maid? I hope not. Are you so young, and is all the flower of life blighted for you? the cup without savour, the sun blotted or almost invisible over your head? The truth came on me all at once: I felt ashamed that my own selfish grief should have made me blind to hers.

"What!" said I, "my poor child? Was it . . .?" and I pointed with my finger *downwards*.

She nodded her poor head.

I knew it was the lodger who had taken the first floor shortly after Slumley's departure. He was an officer in the Bombay

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Army. He had had the lodgings for three months. He had sailed for India shortly before I returned home from Dublin.

Elizabeth is waiting all this time—shall she come in? No, not yet. I have still a little more to say about the Priors.

You understand that she was no longer Miss Prior of Beak Street, and that mansion, even at the time of which I write, had been long handed over to other tenants. The Captain dead, his widow with many tears pressed me to remain with her, and I did, never having been able to resist that kind of appeal. Her statements regarding her affairs were not strictly correct.—Are not women sometimes incorrect about money matters?—A landlord (not unjustly indignant) quickly handed over the mansion in Beak Street to other tenants. The Queen's taxes swooped down on poor Mrs. Prior's scanty furniture—on hers?—on mine likewise: on my neatly-bound College books, emblazoned with the effigy of Bonifacius, our patron, and of Bishop Budgeon, our founder; on my elegant Raphael Morghen prints, purchased in undergraduate days—(ye Powers! what *did* make us boys go tick for fifteen-guinea proofs of Raphael, Dying Stags, Duke of Wellington Banquets, and the like?); my harmonium, at which SOME ONE has warbled songs of my composition—(I mean the words, artfully describing my passion, my hopes, or my despair); on my rich set of Bohemian glass, bought on the Zeil, Frankfort O. M.; on my picture of my father, the late Captain Batchelor (Hoppner), R.N.; in white ducks, and a telescope, pointing, of course, to a tempest, in the midst of which was a naval engagement; on my poor mother's miniature, by old Adam Buck, in pencil and pink, with no waist to speak of at all; my tea and cream pots (bullion), with a hundred such fond knick-knacks as decorate the chamber of a lonely man. I found all these household treasures in possession of the myrmidons of the law, and had to pay the Priors' taxes with this hand, before I could be redintegrated in my own property. Mrs. Prior could only pay me back with a widow's tears and blessings (Prior having quitted a world where he had long ceased to be of use or ornament). The tears and blessings, I say,

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she offered me freely, and they were all very well. But why go on tampering with the tea-box, madam? Why put your finger—your finger?—your whole paw—in the jam-pot? And it is a horrible fact that the wine and spirit bottles were just as leaky after Prior's decease as they had been during his disreputable lifetime. One afternoon, having a sudden occasion to return to my lodgings, I found my wretched landlady in the very act of marauding sherry. She gave an hysterical laugh, and then burst into tears. She declared that since her poor Prior's death she hardly knew what she said or did. She may have been incoherent; she was; but she certainly spoke truth on *this* occasion.

I am speaking lightly—flippantly, if you please—about this old Mrs. Prior, with her hard eager smile, her wizened face, her frowning look, her cruel voice; and yet, goodness knows, I could, if I liked, be as serious as a sermoniser. Why, this woman had once red cheeks, and was well-looking enough, and told few lies, and stole no sherry, and felt the tender passions of the heart, and I dare say kissed the weak old beneficed clergyman her father very fondly and remorsefully that night when she took leave of him to skip round to the back garden-gate and run away with Mr. Prior. Maternal instinct she had, for she nursed her young as best she could from her lean breast, and went about hungrily, robbing and pilfering for them. On Sundays she furbished up that threadbare black silk gown and bonnet, ironed the collar, and clung desperately to church. She had a feeble pencil-drawing of the vicarage in Dorsetshire, and *silhouettes* of her father and mother, which were hung up in the lodgings wherever she went. She migrated much: wherever she went she fastened on the gown of the clergyman of the parish; spoke of her dear father the vicar, of her wealthy and gifted brother the Master of Boniface, with a reticence which implied that Doctor Sargent might do more for his poor sister and her family, if he would. She plumed herself (oh! those poor moulting old plumes!) upon belonging to the clergy; had read a good deal of good sound old-fashioned theology in early life, and wrote a noble hand, in which she had been used to copy her father's sermons. She used to put cases of conscience,

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to present her humble duty to the Reverend Mr. Green, and ask explanation of such and such a passage of his admirable sermon, and bring the subject round so as to be reminded of certain quotations of Hooker, Beveridge, Jeremy Taylor. I think she had an old commonplace book with a score of these extracts, and she worked them in very amusingly and dexterously into her conversation. Green would be interested: perhaps pretty young Mrs. Green would call, secretly rather shocked at the coldness of old Doctor Brown, the rector, about Mrs. Prior. Between Green and Mrs. Prior money transactions would ensue: Mrs. Green's visits would cease: Mrs. Prior was an expensive woman to know. I remember Pye of Maudlin, just before he "went over," was perpetually in Mrs. Prior's back parlour with little books, pictures, medals, &c. &c. —you know. They called poor Jack a Jesuit at Oxbridge; but one year at Rome I met him (with a half-crown shaved out of his head, and a hat as big as Don Basilio's); and he said, "My dear Batchelor, do you know that person at your lodgings? I think she was an artful creature! She borrowed fourteen pounds of me, and I forget how much of—seven, I think—of Barfoot, of Corpus, just—just before we were received. And I believe she absolutely got another loan from Pummel, to be able to get out of the hands of us Jesuits. Are you going to hear the Cardinal? Do—do go and hear him—everybody does: it's the most fashionable thing in Rome." And from this I opine that there are slyboots in other communions besides that of Rome.

Now Mamma Prior had not been unaware of the love-passages between her daughter and the fugitive Bombay captain. Like Elizabeth, she called Captain Walkingham "villain" readily enough; but, if I know woman's nature in the least (and I don't), the old schemer had thrown her daughter only too frequently in the officer's way, had done no small portion of the flirting herself, had allowed poor Bessy to receive presents from Captain Walkingham, and had been the manager and directress of much of the mischief which ensued. You see, in this humble class of life, unprincipled mothers *will* coax and wheedle and cajole gentlemen whom they suppose to be eligible, in order to procure an establishment for their darling

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children! What the Prioress did was done from the best motives of course. "Never—never did the monster see Bessy without me, or one or two of her brothers and sisters, and Jack and dear Ellen are as sharp children as any in England!" protested the indignant Mrs. Prior to me; "and if one of my boys had been grown up, Walkingham never would have dared to act as he did—the unprincipled wretch! My poor husband would have punished the villain as he deserved; but what could he do in his shattered state of health? Oh! you men,—you men, Mr. Batchelor! how *unprincipled* you are!"

"Why, my good Mrs. Prior," said I, "you let Elizabeth come to my room often enough."

"To have the conversation of her uncle's friend, of an educated man, of a man so much older than herself! Of course, dear sir! Would not a mother wish every advantage for her child? and whom could I trust, if not you, who have ever been such a friend to me and mine?" asks Mrs. Prior, wiping her dry eyes with the corner of her handkerchief, as she stands by my fire, my monthly bills in hand,—written in her neat old-fashioned writing, and calculated with that prodigal liberality which she always exercised in compiling the little accounts between us. "Why, bless me!" says my cousin, little Mrs. Skinner, coming to see me once when I was unwell, and examining one of the just-mentioned documents,—"bless me! Charles, you consume more tea than all my family, though we are seven in the parlour, and as much sugar and butter,—well, it's no wonder you are bilious!"

"But then, my dear, I like my tea so *very* strong," said I; "and you take yours so uncommonly mild. I have remarked it at your parties."

"It's a shame that a man should be robbed so," cried Mrs. S.

"How kind it is of you to cry thieves, Flora!" I reply.

"It's my duty, Charles!" exclaims my cousin. "And I should like to know who that great, tall, gawky, red-haired girl in the passage is!"

Ah me! the name of the only woman who ever had possession of this heart was not Elizabeth; though I own I did think at one time that my little schemer of a landlady would not have

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objected if I had proposed to make Miss Prior Mrs. Batchelor. And it is not only the poor and needy who have this mania, but the rich too. In the very highest circles, as I am informed by the best authorities, this match-making goes on. Ah woman—woman!—ah wedded wife!—ah fond mother of fair daughters! how strange thy passion is to add to thy titles that of mother-in-law! I am told, when you have got the title, it is often but a bitterness and a disappointment. Very likely the son-in-law is rude to you, the coarse ungrateful brute! and very possibly the daughter rebels, the thankless serpent! And yet you will go on scheming: and having met only with disappointment from Louisa and her husband, you will try and get one for Jemima, and Maria, and down even to little Toddles coming out of the nursery in her red shoes! When you see her with little Tommy, your neighbour's child, fighting over the same Noah's ark, or clambering on the same rocking-horse, I make no doubt, in your fond silly head, you are thinking, "Will those little people meet some twenty years hence?" And you give Tommy a very large piece of cake, and have a fine present for him on the Christmas tree—you know you do, though he is but a rude noisy child, and has already beaten Toddles, and taken her doll away from her, and made her cry. I remember, when I myself was suffering from the conduct of a young woman in—in a capital which is distinguished by a viceregal Court—and from *her* heartlessness, as well as that of her relative, who I once thought would be *my* mother-in-law—shrieking out to a friend who happened to be spouting some lines from Tennyson's "Ulysses:"—"By George! Warrington, I have no doubt that when the young sirens set their green caps at the old Greek captain and his crew, waving and beckoning him with their white arms and glancing smiles, and wheedling him with their sweetest pipes—I make no doubt, sir, that *the mother sirens* were behind the rocks (with their dyed fronts and cheeks painted, so as to resist water), and calling out—'Now, Halcyone, my child, that air from the Pirata! Now, Glaukopis, dear, look well at that old gentleman at the helm! Bathykolpos, love, there's a young sailor on the maintop, who will tumble right down into your lap if you beckon him!' And so on—and so on." And I laughed a

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wild shriek of despair. For I, too, have been on the dangerous island, and come away thence, mad, furious, wanting a strait-waistcoat.

And so, when a white-armed siren, named Glorvina, was bedevilling *me* with her all too tempting ogling and singing, I did not see at the time, but *now* I know, that her artful mother was egging that artful child on.

How, when the Captain died, bailiffs and executions took possession of his premises, I have told in a previous page, nor do I care to enlarge much upon the odious theme. I think the bailiffs were on the premises before Prior's exit: but he did not know of their presence. If I had to buy them out, 'twas no great matter: only I say it *was* hard of Mrs. Prior to represent me in the character of Shylock to the Master of Boniface. Well—well! I suppose there are other gentlemen besides Mr. Charles Batchelor who have been misrepresented in this life. Sargent and I made up matters afterwards, and Miss Bessy was the cause of our coming together again. "Upon my word, my dear Batchelor," says he one Christmas, when I went up to the old College, "I did not know how much my—ahem!—my family was obliged to you! My—ahem!—niece, Miss Prior, has informed me of various acts of—ahem!—generosity which you showed to my poor sister, and her still more wretched husband. You got my second—ahem!—nephew—pardon me if I forget his Christian name—into the what-d'you-call'em—Bluecoat School; you have been, on various occasions, of considerable pecuniary service to my sister's family. A man need not take high university honours to have a good—ahem!—heart; and, upon my word, Batchelor, I and my—ahem!—wife are sincerely obliged to you!"

"I tell you what, Master," said I, "there *is* a point upon which you ought really to be obliged to me, and in which I have been the means of putting money into your pocket too."

"I confess I fail to comprehend you," says the Master, with his grandest air.

"I have got you and Mrs. Sargent a very good governess for your children, at the very smallest remuneration," say I.

"Do you know the charges that unhappy sister of mine

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and her family have put me to already?" says the Master, turning as red as his hood.

"They have formed the frequent subject of your conversation," I replied. "You have had Bessy as a governess——"

"A nursery governess—she has learned Latin and a great deal more, since she has been in my house," cries the Master.

"A nursery governess at the wages of a housemaid," I continued, as bold as Corinthian brass.

"Does my niece, does my—ahem!—children's governess, complain of her treatment in my College?" cries the Master.

"My dear Master," I asked, "you don't suppose I would have listened to her complaints, or, at any rate, have repeated them, until now!"

"And why now, Batchelor, I should like to know?" says the Master, pacing up and down his study in a fume, under the portraits of Holy Bonifacius, Bishop Budgeon, and all the defunct bigwigs of the College. "And why now, Batchelor, I should like to know?" says he.

"Because—though after staying with you for three years, and having improved herself greatly, as every woman must in your society, my dear Master, Miss Prior is worth at least fifty guineas a year more than you give her—I would not have had her speak until she had found a better place."

"You mean to say she proposes to go away?"

"A wealthy friend of mine, who was a member of our College by the way, wants a nursery governess, and I have recommended Miss Prior to him, at seventy guineas a year."

"And pray who's the member of my College who will give my niece seventy guineas?" asked the Master, fiercely.

"You remember Lovel, the gentleman-pensioner?"

"The sugar-baking man—the man who took you out of ja——?"

"One good turn deserves another," say I, hastily. "I have done as much for some of your family, Sargent!"

The red Master, who had been rustling up and down his study in his gown and bands, stopped in his walk as if I had struck him. He looked at me. He turned redder than ever. He drew his hand over his eyes. "Batchelor," says he, "I ask your pardon. It was I who forgot myself—may Heaven

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forgive me!—forgot how good you have been to my family, to my—ahem!—*humble* family, and—and how devoutly thankful I ought to be for the protection which they have found in you." His voice quite fell as he spoke: and of course any little wrath which I might have felt was disarmed before his contrition. We parted the best friends. He not only shook hands with me at the study-door, but he actually followed me to the hall-door, and shook hands at his lodge-porch, *sub Jove*, in the quadrangle. Huckles, the tutor (Highlow Huckles we used to call him in our time), and Botts (Trumperian professor), who happened to be passing through the court at the time, stood aghast as they witnessed the phenomenon.

"I say, Batchelor," asks Huckles, "have you been made a marquis by any chance?"

"Why a marquis, Huckles?" I ask.

"Sargent never comes to his lodge-door with any man under a marquis," says Huckles, in a low whisper.

"Or a pretty woman," says that Botts (he *will* have his joke). "Batchelor, my elderly Tiresias, are you turned into a lovely young lady *par hasard?*"

"Get along, you absurd Trumperian professor!" say I. But the circumstance was the talk not only in Compotation Room that evening over our wine, but of the whole College. And further, events happened which made each man look at his neighbour with wonder. For that whole term Sargent did not ask our nobleman Lord Sackville (Lord Wigmore's son) to the lodge. (Lord W.'s father, you know, Duff, was baker to the College.) For that whole term he was rude but twice to Perks, the junior tutor, and then only in a very mild way; and what is more, he gave his niece a present of a gown, of his blessing, of a kiss, and a high character, when she went away;—and promised to put one of her young brothers to school—which promise, I need not say, he faithfully kept: for he has good principles, Sargent has. He is rude: he is ill bred: he is *bumptious* beyond almost any man I ever knew: he is spoiled not a little by prosperity;—but he is magnanimous: he can own that he has been in the wrong; and oh me! what a quantity of Greek he knows!

Although my late friend the Captain never seemed to do

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aught but spend the family money, his disreputable presence somehow acted for good in the household. "My dear husband kept our family together," Mrs. Prior said, shaking her lean head under her meagre widow's cap. "Heaven knows how I shall provide for these lambs now he is gone!" Indeed, it was not until after the death of that tipsy shepherd that the wolves of the law came down upon the lambs—myself included, who have passed the age of lambhood and mint sauce a long time. They came down upon our fold in Beak Street, I say, and ravished it. What was I to do? Could I leave that widow and children in their distress? I was not ignorant of misfortune, and knew how to succour the miserable. Nay, I think, the little excitement attendant upon the seizure of my goods, &c., the insolent vulgarity of the low persons in possession—with one of whom I was very near coming to a personal encounter—and other incidents which occurred in the bereft household, served to rouse me, and dissipate some of the languor and misery under which I was suffering in consequence of Miss Mulligan's conduct to me. I know I took the late Captain to his final abode. My good friends the printers of the *Museum* took one of his boys into their counting-house. A blue coat and a pair of yellow stockings were procured for Augustus; and seeing the Master's children walking about in Boniface gardens with a glum-looking old wretch of a nurse, I bethought me of proposing to him to take his niece Miss Prior—and, Heaven be good to me! never said one word to her uncle about Miss Bellenden and the Academy. I dare say I drew a number of long bows about her. I managed about the bad grammar pretty well by lamenting that Elizabeth's poor mother had been forced to allow the girl to keep company with ill-educated people: and added, that she could not fail to mend her English in the house of one of the most distinguished scholars in Europe, and one of the best-bred women. I did say so, upon my word, looking that half-bred, stuck-up Mrs. Sargent gravely in the face; and I humbly trust, if that bouncer has been registered against me, the Recording Angel will be pleased to consider that the motive was good, though the statement was unjustifiable. But I don't think it was the compliment: I think it was the

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temptation of getting a governess for next to nothing that operated upon Madam Sargent. And so Bessy went to her aunt, partook of the bread of dependence, and drank of the cup of humiliation, and ate the pie of humility, and brought up her odious little cousins to the best of her small power, and bowed the head of hypocrisy before the don her uncle, and the pompous little upstart her aunt. *She* the best-bred woman in England, indeed! She, the little vain skinflint!

Bessy's mother was not a little loth to part with the fifty pounds a year which the child brought home from the Academy; but her departure thence was inevitable. Some quarrel had taken place there, about which the girl did not care to talk. Some rudeness had been offered to Miss Bellenden, to which Miss Prior was determined not to submit: or was it that she wanted to go away from the scenes of her own misery, and to try and forget that Indian captain? Come, fellow-sufferer! Come, child of misfortune, come hither! Here is an old bachelor who will weep with thee tear for tear!

I protest here is Miss Prior coming into the room at last. A pale face, a tawny head of hair combed back, under a black cap: a pair of blue spectacles, as I live! a tight mourning dress, buttoned up to her white throat; a head hung meekly down: such is Miss Prior. She takes my hand when I offer it. She drops me a demure little curtsey, and answers my many questions with humble monosyllabic replies. She appeals constantly to Lady Baker for instruction, or for confirmation of her statements. What! have six years of slavery so changed the frank daring young girl whom I remember in Beak Street! She is taller and stouter than she was. She is awkward and high-shouldered, but surely she has a very fine figure.

"Will Miss Cissy and Master Popham have their teas here or in the schoolroom?" asks Bedford, the butler, of his master. Miss Prior looks appealingly to Lady Baker.

"In the sch——" Lady Baker is beginning.

"Here—here!" bawl out the children. "Much better fun down here: and you'll send us out some fruit and things from dinner, Papa!" cries Cissy.

"It's time to dress for dinner," says her Ladyship.

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"Has the first bell rung?" asks Lovel.

"Yes, the first bell has rung, and Grandmamma must go, for it always takes her a precious long time to dress for dinner!" cries Pop. And indeed, on looking at Lady Baker, the connoisseur might perceive that her Ladyship was a highly composite person, whose charms required very much care and arrangement. There are some cracked old houses where the painters and plumbers and puttyers are always at work.

"Have the goodness to ring the bell!" she says, in a majestic manner, to Miss Prior, though I think Lady Baker herself was nearest.

I sprang towards the bell myself, and my hand meets Elizabeth's there, who was obeying her Ladyship's summons, and who retreats, making me the demurest curtsey. At the summons, enter Bedford the butler (he was an old friend of mine too) and young Buttons, the page under that butler.

Lady Baker points to a heap of articles on a table, and says to Bedford: "If you please, Bedford, tell my man to give those things to Pincott, my maid, to be taken to my room."

"Shall not I take them up, dear Lady Baker?" says Miss Prior.

But Bedford, looking at his subordinate, says: "Thomas! tell Bulkeley, her Ladyship's man, to take her Ladyship's things, and give them to her Ladyship's maid." There was a tone of sarcasm, even of parody, in Monsieur Bedford's voice; but his manner was profoundly grave and respectful. Drawing up her person, and making a motion, I don't know whether of politeness or defiance, exit Lady Baker, followed by page, bearing bandboxes, shawls, paper parcels, parasols—I know not what. Dear Popham stands on his head as Grandmamma leaves the room. "Don't be vulgar!" cries little Cissy (the dear child is always acting as a little Mentor to her brother). "I shall, if I like," says Pop; and he makes faces at her.

"You know your room, Batch?" asks the master of the house.

"Mr. Batchelor's old room—always has the blue room," says Bedford, looking very kindly at me.

"Give us," cried Lovel, "a bottle of that Sau——"

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"——terne Mr. Batchelor used to like. Château Yquem. All right!" says Mr. Bedford. "How will you have the turbot done you brought down?—Dutch sauce?—Make lobster into salad? Mr. Bonnington likes lobster-salad," says Bedford. Pop is winding up the butler's back at this time. It is evident Mr. Bedford is a privileged person in the family. As he had entered it on my nomination several years ago, and had been ever since the faithful valet, butler, and major-domo of Lovel, Bedford and I were always good friends when we met.

"By the way, Bedford, why wasn't the barouche sent for me to the bridge?" cries Lovel. "I had to walk all the way home, with a bat and stumps for Pop, with the basket of fish, and that bandbox with my Lady's——"

"He—he!" grins Bedford.

"'He—he!' Confound you, why do you stand grinning there? Why didn't I have the carriage, I say?" bawls the master of the house.

"*You* know, sir," says Bedford. "*She* had the carriage." And he indicated the door through which Lady Baker had just retreated.

"Then why didn't I have the phaeton?" asks Bedford's master.

"Your Ma and Mr. Bonnington had the phaeton."

"And why shouldn't they, pray? Mr. Bonnington is lame: I'm at my business all day. I should like to know why they *shouldn't* have the phaeton?" says Lovel, appealing to me. As we had been sitting talking together previous to Miss Prior's appearance, Lady Baker had said to Lovel, "Your mother and Mr. Bonnington are coming to dinner *of course*, Frederick?" and Lovel had said, "Of course they are," with a peevish bluster, whereof I now began to understand the meaning. The fact was, these two women were fighting for the possession of this child; but who was the Solomon to say which should have him? Not I. *Nenni.* I put my oar in no man's boat. Give me an easy life, my dear friends, and row me gently over.

"You had better go and dress," says Bedford sternly, looking at his master; "the first bell has rung this quarter of an hour. Will you have some '34?"

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Lovel started up; he looked at the clock. "You are all ready, Batch, I see. I hope you are going to stay some time, ain't you?" And he disappeared to array himself in his sables and starch. I was thus alone with Miss Prior and her young charges, who resumed straightway their infantine gambols and quarrels.

"My dear Bessy!" I cry, holding out both hands, "I am heartily glad to——"

"Ne m'appelez que de mon nom paternel devant tout ce monde, s'il vous plaît, mon cher ami, mon bon protecteur!" she says, hastily, in very good French, folding her hands and making a curtsey.

"Oui, oui, oui! Parlez-vous Français? J'aime, tu aimes, il aime!" cries out dear Master Popham. "What are you talking about? Here's the phaeton!" and the young innocent dashes through the open window on to the lawn, whither he is followed by his sister, and where we see the carriage containing Mr. and Mrs. Bonnington rolling over the smooth walk.

Bessy advances towards me, and gives me readily enough now the hand she had refused anon.

"I never thought you would have refused it, Bessy," said I.

"Refuse it to the best friend I ever had!" she says, pressing my hand. "Ah, dear Mr. Batchelor, what an ungrateful wretch I should be, if I did!"

"Let me see your eyes. Why do you wear spectacles? You never wore them in Beak Street," I say. You see I was very fond of the child. She had wound herself around me in a thousand fond ways. Owing to a certain Person's conduct my heart may be a ruin—a Persepolis, sir—a perfect Tadmor. But what then? May not a traveller rest under its shattered columns? May not an Arab maid repose there till the morning dawns and the caravan passes on? Yes, my heart is a Palmyra, and once a Queen inhabited me (O Zenobia! Zenobia! to think thou should'st have been led away captive by an O'D—!). Now, I am alone, alone in the solitary wilderness. Nevertheless, if a stranger comes to me I have a spring for his weary feet, I will give him the shelter of my shade. Rest thy cheek awhile, young maiden, on my marble—then go thy ways and leave me.

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This I thought, or something to this effect, as, in reply to my remark, "Let me see your eyes," Bessy took off her spectacles, and I took them up and looked at her. Why didn't I say to her, "My dear brave Elizabeth! as I look in your face, I see you have had an awful deal of suffering. Your eyes are inscrutably sad. We who are initiated, know the members of our Community of Sorrow. We have both been wrecked in different ships, and been cast on this shore. Let us go hand-in-hand, and find a cave and a shelter somewhere together!" I say, why didn't I say this to her? She would have come, I feel sure she would. We would have been semi-attached as it were. We would have locked up that room in either heart where the skeleton was, and said nothing about it, and pulled down the party wall and taken our mild tea in the garden. I live in Pump Court now. It would have been better than this dingy loneliness and a snuffy laundress who bullies me. But for Bessy? Well—well, perhaps better for her too.

I remember these thoughts rushing through my mind whilst I held the spectacles. What a number of other things too! I remember two canaries making a tremendous concert in their cage. I remember the voices of the two children quarrelling on the lawn, the sound of the carriage wheels grinding over the gravel; and then of a little old familiar cracked voice in my ear, with a "La, Mr. Batchelor; are *you* here?" And a sly face looks up at me from under an old bonnet.

"It is Mamma," says Bessy.

"And I'm come to tea with Elizabeth and the dear children; and while you are at dinner, dear Mr. Batchelor, thankful—thankful for all mercies! And dear me! here is Mrs. Bonnington, I do declare! Dear madam, how well you look—not twenty, I declare! And dear Mr. Bonnington! Oh, sir! let me—let me, I *must* press your hand. What a sermon last Sunday! All Putney was in tears!"

And the little woman, flinging out her lean arms, seizes portly Mr. Bonnington's fat hand, as he and kind Mrs. Bonnington enter at the open casement. The little woman seems inclined to do the honours of the house. "And won't you go upstairs, and put on your cap? Dear me, what a lovely ribbon! How blue does become Mrs. Bonnington! I always

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BESSY'S SPECTACLES.

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say so to Elizabeth," she cries, peeping into a little packet which Mrs. Bonnington bears in her hand. After exchanging friendly words and greetings with me, that lady retires to put the lovely cap on, followed by her little jackal of an aide-de-camp. The portly clergyman surveys his pleased person in the spacious mirror. "Your things are in your old room—like to go in, and brush up a bit?" whispers Bedford to me. I am obliged to go, you see, though, for my part, I had thought, until Bedford spoke, that the ride on the top of the Putney omnibus had left me without any need of brushing; having aired my clothes, and given my young cheek a fresh and agreeable bloom.

My old room, as Bedford calls it, was that snug apartment communicating by double doors with the drawing-room, and whence you can walk on to the lawn out of the windows.

"Here's your books, here's your writing-paper," says Bedford, leading the way into the chamber. "Does sore eyes good to see *you* down here again, sir. You may smoke now. Clarence Baker smokes when he comes. Go and get some of that wine you like for dinner." And the good fellow's eyes beam kindness upon me as he nods his head, and departs to superintend the duties of his table. Of course you understand that this Bedford was my young printer's boy of former days. What a queer fellow! I had not only been kind to him, but he was grateful.

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CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH I PLAY THE SPY.

THE room to which Bedford conducted me I hold to be the very pleasantest chamber in all the mansion of Shrublands. To lie on that comfortable cool bachelor's bed there, and see the birds hopping about on the lawn; to peep out of the French window at early morning, inhale the sweet air, mark the dewy bloom on the grass, listen to the little warblers performing their chorus, step forth in your dressing-gown and slippers, pick a strawberry from the bed, or an apricot in its season; blow one, two, three, just half-a-dozen puffs of a cigarette; hear the venerable towers of Putney toll the hour of six (three hours from breakfast, by consequence), and pop back into bed again with a favourite novel, or review, to set you off (you see I am not malicious, or I could easily insert here the name of some twaddler against whom I have a grudgekin): to pop back into bed again, I say, with a book which sets you off into that dear invaluable second sleep, by which health, spirits, appetite are so prodigiously improved:—all these I hold to be most cheerful and harmless pleasures,

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and have partaken of them often at Shrublands with a grateful heart. That heart may have had its griefs, but is yet susceptible of enjoyment and consolation. That bosom may have been lacerated, but is not therefore and henceforward a stranger to comfort. After a certain affair in Dublin—nay, very soon after, three months after—I recollect remarking to myself: "Well, thank my stars, I still have a relish for '34 claret." Once at Shrublands I heard steps pacing overhead at night, and the feeble but continued wail of an infant. I wakened from my sleep, was sulky, but turned and slept again. Biddlecombe the barrister, I knew, was the occupant of the upper chamber. He came down the next morning looking wretchedly yellow about the cheeks, and livid round the eyes. His teething infant had kept him on the march all night, and Mrs. Biddlecombe, I am told, scolds him frightfully besides. He munched a shred of toast, and was off by the omnibus to chambers. I chipped a second egg; I may have tried one or two other nice little things on the table (Strasbourg pâté I know I never can resist, and am convinced it is perfectly wholesome). I could see my own sweet face in the mirror opposite, and my gills were as rosy as any broiled salmon. "Well—well!" I thought as the barrister disappeared on the roof of the coach, "he has *domus* and *placens uxor*—but is she *placens*? *Placetne* to walk about all night with a roaring baby? Is it pleasing to go to bed after a long hard day's work, and have your wife nagnagging you because she has not been invited to the Lady Chancelloress's *soirée*, or what not? Suppose the Glorvina whom you loved so had been yours? Her eyebrows looked as if they could scowl, her eyes as if they could flash with anger. Remember what a slap she gave the little knife-boy for upsetting the butter-boat over her tabinet. Suppose *parvulus aulâ*, a little Batchelor your son, who had the toothache all night in your bedroom?" These thoughts passed rapidly through my mind as I helped myself to the comfortable meal before me. "I say, what a lot of muffins you're eating!" cried innocent Master Lovel. Now the married, the wealthy, the prosperous Biddlecombe only took his wretched scrap of dry toast. "Aha!" you say, "this man is consoling himself after his misfortune." O churl! and

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do you grudge me consolation? "Thank you, dear Miss Prior. Another cup, and plenty of cream, if you please." Of course, Lady Baker was not at table when I said, "Dear Miss Prior," at breakfast. Before her Ladyship I was as mum as a mouse. Elizabeth found occasion to whisper to me during the day in her demure way: "This is a very rare occasion. Lady B—— never allows me to breakfast alone with Mr. Lovel, but has taken her extra nap, I suppose, because you and Mr. and Mrs. Biddlecombe were here."

Now it may be that one of the double doors of the room which I inhabited was occasionally open, and that Mr. Batchelor's eyes and ears are uncommonly quick, and note a number of things which less observant persons would never regard or discover; but out of this room, which I occupied for some few days, now and subsequently, I looked forth as from a little ambush upon the proceedings of the house, and got a queer little insight into the history and characters of the personages round about me. The two grandmothers of Lovel's children were domineering over that easy gentleman, as women—not grandmothers merely, but sisters, wives, aunts, daughters, when the chance is given them—will domineer. Ah! Glorvina, what a grey mare you might have become had you chosen Mr. Batchelor for your consort! (But this I only remark with a parenthetic sigh.) The two children had taken each the side of a grandmamma, and whilst Master Pop was declared by his maternal grandmother to be a Baker all over, and taught to despise sugar-baking and trade, little Cecilia was Mrs. Bonnington's favourite, repeated Watts's hymns with fervent precocity; declared that she would marry none but a clergyman; preached infantine sermons to her brother and maid about worldliness; and somewhat wearied me, if the truth must be told, by the intense self-respect with which she regarded her own virtues. The old ladies had that love for each other, which one may imagine that their relative positions would engender. Over the bleeding and helpless bodies of Lovel and his worthy and kind stepfather, Mr. Bonnington, they skirmished and fired shots at each other. Lady B—— would give hints about second marriages, and second families, and so forth, which of

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course made Mrs. Bonnington wince. Mrs. B—— had the better of Lady Baker, in consequence of the latter's notorious pecuniary irregularities. *She* had never had recourse to her son's purse, she could thank Heaven. She was not afraid of meeting any tradesman in Putney or London: she had never been ordered out of the house in the late Cecilia's lifetime; *she* could go to Boulogne and enjoy the *fresh air* there. This was the terrific whip she had over Baker. Lady B——, I regret to say, in consequence of the failure of remittances, had been locked up in prison, just at a time when she was in a state of violent quarrel with her late daughter, and good Mr. Bonnington had helped her out of durance. How did I know this? Bedford, Lovel's factotum, told me: and how the old ladies were fighting like two cats.

There was one point on which the two ladies agreed. A very wealthy widower, young still, good-looking, and good-tempered, we know can sometimes find a dear woman to console his loneliness, and protect his motherless children. From the neighbouring Heath, from Wimbledon, Roehampton, Barnes, Mortlake, Richmond, Esher, Walton, Windsor, nay, Reading, Bath, Exeter, and Penzance itself, or from any other quarter of Britain, over which your fancy may please to travel, families would have come ready with dear young girls to take charge of that man's future happiness; but it is a fact that these two dragons kept all women off from their ward. An unmarried woman, with decent good looks, was scarce ever allowed to enter Shrublands gate. If such an one appeared, Lovel's two mothers sallied out, and crunched her hapless bones. Once or twice he dared to dine with his neighbours, but the ladies led him such a life that the poor creature gave up the practice, and faintly announced his preference for home. "My dear Batch," says he, "what do I care for the dinners of the people round about? Has any one of them got a better cook or better wine than mine? When I come home from business, it is an intolerable nuisance to have to dress and go out seven or eight miles to cold *entrées*, and loaded claret, and sweet port. I can't stand it, sir. I *won't* stand it" (and he stamps his foot in a resolute manner). "Give me an easy life, a wine-merchant I can trust, and my own friends, by my own

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fireside. Shall we have some more? We can manage another bottle among us three, Mr. Bonnington?"

"Well," says Mr. Bonnington, winking at the ruby goblet, "I am sure I have no objection, Frederick, to another bo——"

"Coffee is served, sir," cries Bedford, entering.

"Well—well, perhaps we have had enough," says worthy Bonnington.

"We *have* had enough; we all drink too much," says Lovel, briskly. "Come in to coffee."

We go to the drawing-room. Fred and I, and the two ladies, sit down to a rubber, whilst Miss Prior plays a piece of Beethoven to a slight warbling accompaniment from Mr. Bonnington's handsome nose, who has fallen asleep over the newspaper. During our play, Bessy glides out of the room —a grey shadow. Bonnington wakens up when the tray is brought in. Lady Baker likes that good old custom: it was always the fashion at the Castle, and she takes a good glass of negus too; and so do we all; and the conversation is pretty merry, and Fred Lovel hopes I shall sleep better to-night, and is very facetious about poor Biddlecombe, and the way in which that eminent Q.C. is henpecked by his wife.

From my bachelor's room, then, on the ground-floor; or from my solitary walks in the garden, whence I could oversee many things in the house; or from Bedford's communications to me, which were very friendly, curious, and unreserved; or from my own observation, which I promise you can see as far into the millstones of life as most folk's, I grew to find the mysteries of Shrublands no longer mysterious to me; and, like another *Diable Boiteux*, had the roofs of a pretty number of the Shrublands rooms taken off for me.

For instance, on that very first day of my stay, whilst the family were attiring themselves for dinner, I chanced to find two secret cupboards of the house unlocked, and the contents unveiled to me. Pinhorn, the children's maid, a giddy little flirting thing in a pink ribbon, brought some articles of the toilette into my worship's apartment, and as she retired did not shut the door behind her. I might have thought that pert little head had never been made to ache by any care; but ah!

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black care sits behind the horseman, as Horace remarks, and not only behind the horseman, but behind the footman; and not only on the footman, but on the buxom shoulders of the lady's-maid. So with Pinhorn. You surely have remarked respecting domestic servants that they address you in a tone utterly affected and unnatural—adopting when they are amongst each other, voices and gestures entirely different from those which their employers see and hear. Now, this little Pinhorn, in her occasional intercourse with your humble servant, had a brisk, quick, fluttering toss of the head, and a frisky manner, no doubt capable of charming some persons. As for me, ancillary allurements have, I own, had but small temptations. If Venus brought me a bedroom candle and a jug of hot water, I should give her sixpence, and no more. Having, you see, given my all to one wom—Psha! never mind *that* old story.—Well, I dare say this little creature may have been a flirt, but I took no more notice of her than if she had been a coal-scuttle.

Now, suppose she *was* a flirt. Suppose, under a mask of levity, she hid a profound sorrow. Do you suppose she was the first woman who ever has done so? Do you suppose because she had fifteen pounds a year, her tea, sugar, and beer, and told fibs to her masters and mistresses, she had not a heart? She went out of the room, absolutely coaxing and leering at me as she departed, with a great counterpane over her arm; but in the next apartment I heard her voice quite changed, and another changed voice too—though not so much altered—interrogating her. My friend Dick Bedford's voice, in addressing those whom Fortune had pleased to make his superiors, was gruff and brief. He seemed to be anxious to deliver himself of his speech to you as quickly as possible; and his tone always seemed to hint, "There—there is my message, and I have delivered it; but you know perfectly well that I am as good as you." And so he was, and so I always admitted: so even the trembling, believing, flustering, suspicious Lady Baker herself admitted, when she came into communication with this man. I have thought of this little Dick as of Swift at Sheen hard by, with Sir William Temple; or Spartacus when he was as yet the servant of the fortunate Roman

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gentleman who owned him. Now if Dick was intelligent, obedient, useful, only not rebellious, with his superiors, I should fancy that amongst his equals he was by no means pleasant company, and that most of them hated him for his arrogance, his honesty, and his scorn of them all.

But women do not always hate a man for scorning and despising them. Women do not revolt at the rudeness and arrogance of us their natural superiors. Women, if properly trained, come down to heel at the master's bidding, and lick the hand that has been often raised to hit them. I do not say that brave little Dick Bedford ever raised an actual hand to this poor serving-girl, but his tongue whipped her, his behaviour trampled on her, and she cried, and came to him whenever he lifted a finger. Psha! Don't tell *me*. If you want a quiet, contented, orderly home, and things comfortable about you, that is the way you must manage your women.

Well, Bedford happens to be in the next room. It is the morning-room at Shrublands. You enter the dining-room from it, and they are in the habit of laying out the dessert there, before taking it in for dinner. Bedford is laying out his dessert as Pinhorn enters from my chamber, and he begins upon her with a sarcastic sort of grunt, and a "Ho! suppose you've been making up to B., have you?"

"Oh, Mr. Bedford, *you* know very well who it is I cares for!" she says, with a sigh.

"Bother!" Mr. B. remarks.

"Well, Richard, then!" (here she weeps).

"Leave go my 'and!—leave go my a-hand, I say!" (What *could* she have been doing to cause this exclamation?)

"Oh, Richard, it's not your *'and* I want—it's your ah-ah-art, Richard!"

"Mary Pinhorn," exclaims the other, "what's the use of going on with this game? You know we couldn't be a-happy together—you know your ideers ain't no good, Mary. It ain't your fault. *I* don't blame you for it, my dear. Some people are born clever, some are born tall: I ain't tall."

"Oh, you're tall enough for me, Richard!"

Here Richard again found occasion to cry out: "*Don't*, I say! Suppose Baker was to come in and find you squeezing

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of my hand in this way? I say, some people are born with big brains, Miss Pinhorn, and some with big figures. Look at that ass, Bulkeley, Lady B.'s man! He is as big as a Life-guardsman, and he has no more education, nor no more ideas, than the beef he feeds on."

"La! Richard, whathever do you mean?"

"Pooh! How should *you* know what I mean? Lay them books straight. Put the volumes together, stupid! and the papers, and get the table ready for nursery tea, and don't go on there mopping your eyes, and making a fool of yourself, Mary Pinhorn!"

"Oh, your heart is a stone—a stone—a stone!" cries Mary, in a burst of tears. "And I wish it was hung round my neck, and I was at the bottom of the well, and—there's the hupstairs bell!" with which signal I suppose Mary disappeared, for I only heard a sort of grunt from Mr. Bedford; then the clatter of a dish or two, the wheeling of chairs and furniture, and then came a brief silence, which lasted until the entry of Dick's subordinate, Buttons, who laid the table for the children's and Miss Prior's tea.

So here was an old story told over again. Here was love unrequited, and a little passionate heart wounded and unhappy. My poor little Mary! As I am a sinner, I will give thee a crown when I go away, and not a couple of shillings, as my wont has been. Five shillings will not console thee much, but they will console thee a little. Thou wilt not imagine that I bribe thee with any privy thought of evil? Away! "Ich habe genossen das irdische Glück—ich habe—geliebt!"

At this juncture, I suppose Mrs. Prior must have entered the apartment, for though I could not hear her noiseless step, her little cracked voice came pretty clearly to me with a "Good afternoon, Mr. Bedford! Oh, dear me! what a many —many years we have been acquainted! To think of the pretty little printer's boy who used to come to Mr. Batchelor, and see you grown such a fine man!"

Bedford. How? I'm only five foot four.

Mrs. Prior. But such a fine figure, Bedford! You are—now indeed you are! Well, you are strong and I am weak. You are well, and I am weary and faint.

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Bedford. The tea's a-coming directly, Mrs. Prior.

Mrs. Prior. Could you give me a glass of water first—and perhaps a little sherry in it, please. Oh, thank you. How good it is! How it revives a poor old wretch!—and your cough, Bedford? How is your cough? I have brought you some lozenges for it—some of Sir Henry Halford's own prescribing for my dear husband, and——

Bedford (*abruptly*). I must go—never mind the cough now, Mrs. P.

Mrs. Prior. What's here? almonds and raisins, macaroons, preserved apricots, biscuits for dessert—and—la bless the man! how you sta—artled me!

Bedford. Don't! Mrs. Prior: I beg and implore of you, keep your 'ands out of the dessert. I can't stand it. I *must* tell the governor if this game goes on.

Mrs. Prior. Ah! Mr. Bedford, it is for my poor—poor child at home; the doctor recommended her apricots. Ay, indeed, dear Bedford; he did, for her poor chest!

Bedford. And I'm blest if you haven't been at the sherry-bottle again! Oh, Mrs. P., you drive me wild—you do. I can't see Lovel put upon in this way. You know it's only last week I whopped the boy for stealing the sherry, and 'twas you done it.

Mrs. Prior (*passionately*). For a sick child, Bedford. What won't a mother do for her sick child?

Bedford. Your children's always sick. You're always taking things for 'em. I tell you, by the laws, I won't and mustn't stand it, Mrs. P.

Mrs. Prior (*with much spirit*). Go and tell your master, Bedford. Go and tell tales of me, sir. Go and have me dismissed out of this house. Go and have my daughter dismissed out of this house, and her poor mother brought to disgrace.

Bedford. Mrs. Prior—Mrs. Prior! you *have* been a-taking the sherry. A glass I don't mind: but you've been a-bringing that bottle again.

Mrs. Prior (*whimpering*). It's for Charlotte, Bedford! my poor delicate angel of a Shatty! she's ordered it, indeed she is!

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"WHERE THE SUGAR GOES."

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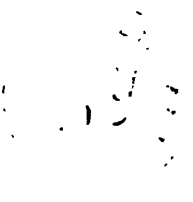

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Bedford. Confound your Shatty! I can't stand it, I mustn't, and won't, Mrs. P.!

Here a noise and clatter of other persons arriving interrupted the conversation between Lovel's major-domo and the mother of the children's governess, and I presently heard Master Pop's voice saying, "You're going to tea with us, Mrs. Prior?"

Mrs. Prior. Your kind dear grandmammas have asked me, dear Master Popham.

Pop. But you'd like to go to dinner best, wouldn't you? I dare say you have doosid bad dinners at your house. Haven't you, Mrs. Prior?

Cissy. Don't say doosid. It's a naughty word, Popham!

Pop. I *will* say doosid. Doo-oo-oosid! There! And I'll say worse words too, if I please, and you hold *your* tongue. What's there for tea? jam for tea? strawberries for tea? muffins for tea? That's it: strawberries and muffins for tea. And we'll go in to dessert besides: that's prime. I say, Miss Prior?

Miss Prior. What do you say, Popham?

Pop. Shouldn't you like to go in to dessert?—there's lots of good things there,—and have wine? Only when Grandmamma tells her story about—about my grandfather and King George the what-d'ye-call-'im: King George the Fourth——

Cis. Ascended the throne, 1820; died at Windsor, 1830.

Pop. Bother Windsor! Well, when she tells that story, I can tell you *that* ain't very good fun.

Cis. And it's rude of you to speak in that way of your grandmamma, Pop!

Pop. And you'll hold *your* tongue, miss! And I shall speak as I like. And I'm a man, and I don't want any of your stuff and nonsense. I say, Mary, give us the marmalade!

Cis. You have had plenty to eat, and boys oughtn't to have so much.

Pop. Boys may have what they like. Boys can eat twice as much as women. There, I don't want any more. Anybody may have the rest.

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Mrs. Prior. What nice marmalade! I know some children, my dears, who——

Miss Prior (*imploringly*). Mamma, I beseech you——

Mrs. Prior. I know three dear children who very—very seldom have nice marmalade and delicious cake.

Pop. I know whom you mean: you mean Augustus, and Frederick, and Fanny—your children? Well, they shall have marmalade and cake.

Cis. Oh, yes, I will give them all mine.

Pop. (*who speaks, I think, as if his mouth was full*). I won't give 'em mine: but they can have another pot, you know. You have always got a basket with you; you know you have, Mrs. Prior. You had it the day you took the cold fowl.

Mrs. Prior. For the poor blind black man! Oh, how thankful he was to his dear young benefactors! He is a man and a brother, and to help him was most kind of you, dear Master Popham!

Pop. That black beggar my brother? He ain't my brother.

Mrs. Prior. No, dears, you have both the most lovely complexions in the world.

Pop. Bother complexions! I say, Mary, another pot of marmalade.

Mary. I don't know, Master Pop——

Pop. I *will* have it, I say. If you don't I'll smash everything, I will.

Cis. Oh, you naughty rude boy!

Pop. Hold your tongue, stupid! I will have it, I say.

Mrs. Prior. Do humour him, Mary, please. And I'm sure my dear children at home will be better for it.

Pop. There's your basket. Now put this cake in, and this bit of butter, and this sugar on the top of the butter. Hurray! hurray! Oh, what jolly fun! Here's some cake—no, I think I'll keep that; and, Mrs. Prior, tell Gus, and Fanny, and Fred, I sent it to 'em, and they shall never want for anything as long as Frederick Popham Baker Lovel, Esquire, can give it them. Did Gus like my grey great-coat that I didn't want?

Miss Prior. You did not give him your new great-coat?

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Pop. It was beastly ugly, and I did give it him; and I'll give him this if I choose. And don't you speak to me; I'm going to school, and I ain't going to have no governesses soon.

Mrs. Prior. Ah, dear child! what a nice coat it is; and how well my boy looks in it!

Miss Prior. Mother, mother! I implore you—mother——

Mr. Lovel enters. So the children at high tea! How d'ye do, Mrs. Prior? I think we shall be able to manage that little matter for your second boy, Mrs. Prior.

Mrs. Prior. Heaven bless you,—bless you, my dear kind benefactor! Don't prevent me, Elizabeth: I *must* kiss his hand. There!

And here the second bell rings, and I enter the morning-room, and can see Mrs. Prior's great basket popped cunningly under the table-cloth. Her basket?—her *porte-manteau*, her *porte-bouteille*, her *porte-gâteau*, her *porte-pantalon*, her *porte-butin* in general. Thus I could see that every day Mrs. Prior visited Shrublands she gleaned greedily of the harvest. Well, Boaz was rich, and this ruthless Ruth was hungry and poor.

At the welcome summons of the second bell, Mr. and Mrs. Bonnington also made their appearance; the latter in the new cap which Mrs. Prior had admired, and which she saluted with a nod of smiling recognition: "Dear madam, it *is* lovely—I told you it was," whispers Mrs. P., and the wearer of the blue ribbons turned her bonny good-natured face towards the looking-glass, and I hope saw no reason to doubt Mrs. Prior's sincerity. As for Bonnington, I could perceive that he had been taking a little nap before dinner,—a practice by which the appetite is improved, I think, and the intellect prepared for the bland prandial conversation.

"Have the children been quite good?" asks Papa of the governess.

"There are worse children, sir," says Miss Prior, meekly.

"Make haste and have your dinner; we are coming in to dessert!" cries Pop.

"You would not have us go to dine without your grandmother?" Papa asks. Dine without Lady Baker, indeed!

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I should have liked to see him go to dinner without Lady Baker.

Pending her Ladyship's arrival, Papa and Mr. Bonnington walk to the open window, and gaze on the lawn and the towers of Putney rising over the wall.

"Ah, my good Mrs. Prior," cries Mrs. Bonnington, "those grandchildren of mine are sadly spoiled."

"Not by *you*, dear madam," says Mrs. Prior, with a look of commiseration. "Your dear children at home are, I am sure, perfect models of goodness. Is Master Edward well, ma'am? and Master Robert, and Master Richard, and dear funny little Master William? Ah, what blessings those children are to you! If a certain wilful little nephew of theirs took after them!"

"The little naughty wretch!" cried Mrs. Bonnington; "do you know, Prior, my grandson Frederick—(I don't know why they call him Popham in this house, or why he should be ashamed of his father's name)—do you know that Popham spilt the ink over my dear husband's bands, which he keeps in his great dictionary, and fought with my Richard, who is three years older than Popham, and actually beat his own uncle!"

"Gracious goodness!" I cried; "you don't mean to say, ma'am, that Pop has been laying violent hands upon his venerable relative?" I feel ever so gentle a pull at my coat. Was it Miss Prior who warned me not to indulge in the sarcastic method with good Mrs. Bonnington?

"I don't know why you call my poor child a venerable relative," Mrs. B. remarks. "I know that Popham was very rude to him: and then Robert came to his brother, and that graceless little Popham took a stick, and my husband came out, and do you know Popham Lovel actually kicked Mr. Bonnington on the shins, and butted him like a little naughty ram; and if you think such conduct is a subject for ridicule—I *don't*, Mr. Batchelor."

"My dear—dear lady!" I cried, seizing her hand; for she was going to cry, and in woman's eye the unanswerable tear always raises a deuce of a commotion in my mind. "I would not for the world say a word that should willingly vex you;

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and as for Popham, I give you my honour, I think nothing would do that child so much good as a good whipping."

"He is spoiled, madam; we know by *whom*," says Mrs. Prior. "Dear Lady Baker! how that red does become your Ladyship!" In fact, Lady B. sailed in at this juncture, arrayed in ribbons of scarlet; with many brooches, bangles, and other gimcracks ornamenting her plenteous person. And now her Ladyship having arrived, Bedford announced that dinner was served, and Lovel gave his mother-in-law an arm, whilst I offered mine to Mrs. Bonnington to lead her to the adjoining dining-room. And the pacable kind soul speedily made peace with me. And we ate and drank of Lovel's best. And Lady Baker told us her celebrated anecdote of George the Fourth's compliment to her late dear husband, Sir Popham, when His Majesty visited Ireland. Mrs. Prior and her basket were gone when we repaired to the drawing-room: having been hunting all day, the hungry mother had returned with her prey to her wide-mouthed birdikins. Elizabeth looked very pale and handsome, reading at her lamp. And whist and the little tray finished the second day at Shrublands.

I paced the moonlit walk alone when the family had gone to rest; and smoked my cigar under the tranquil stars. I had been some thirty hours in the house, and what a queer little drama was unfolding itself before me! What struggles and passions were going on here—what *certamina* and *motus animorum*! Here was Lovel, this willing horse; and what a crowd of relations, what a heap of luggage had the honest fellow to carry! How that little Mrs. Prior was working, and scheming, and tacking, and flattering, and fawning, and plundering, to be sure! And that serene Elizabeth, with what consummate skill, art, and prudence had she to act, to keep her place with two such rivals reigning over her! And Elizabeth not only kept her place, but she actually was liked by those two women! Why, Elizabeth Prior, my wonder and respect for thee increase with every hour during which I contemplate thy character! How is it that you live with those lionesses, and are not torn to pieces? What sops of flattery do you cast to them to appease them? Perhaps I do not think my Elizabeth

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brings up her two children very well, and, indeed, have seldom become acquainted with young people more odious. But is the fault hers, or is it Fortune's spite? How, with these two grandmothers spoiling the children alternately, can the governess do better than she does? How has she managed to lull their natural jealousy? I will work out that intricate problem, that I will, ere many days are over. And there are other mysteries which I perceive. There is poor Mary breaking her heart for the butler. That butler, why does he connive at the rogueries of Mrs. Prior? Ha! herein lies a mystery too; and I vow I will penetrate it ere long. So saying, I fling away the butt-end of the fragrant companion of my solitude, and enter into my room by the open French window just as Bedford walks in at the door. I had heard the voice of that worthy domestic warbling a grave melody from his pantry window as I paced the lawn. When the family goes to rest, Bedford passes a couple of hours in study in his pantry, perusing the newspapers and the new works, and forming his opinion on books and politics. Indeed I have reason to believe that the letters in the *Putney Herald and Mortlake Monitor*, signed "A Voice from the Basement," were Mr. Bedford's composition.

"Come to see all safe for the night, sir, and the windows closed before you turn in," Mr. Dick remarks. "Best not leave 'em open even if you are asleep inside—catch cold—many bad people about. Remember Bromley murder!—Enter at French windows—you cry out—cut your throat—and there's a fine paragraph for papers next morning!"

"What a good voice you have, Bedford!" I say; "I heard you warbling just now—a famous bass, on my word!"

"Always fond of music—sing when I'm cleaning my plate—learned in old Beak Street. *She* used to teach me," and he points towards the upper floors.

"What a little chap you were then!—when you came for my proofs for the *Museum*," I remark.

"I ain't a very big one now, sir; but it ain't the big ones that do the best work," remarks the butler.

"I remember Miss Prior saying that you were as old as she was."

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"Hm! and I scarce came up to her—eh—elbow." (Bedford had constantly to do battle with the aspirates. He conquered them, but you could see there was a struggle.)

"And it was Miss Prior taught you to sing?" I say, looking him full in the face.

He dropped his eyes—he could not bear my scrutiny. I knew the whole story now.

"When Mrs. Lovel died at Naples, Miss Prior brought home the children, and you acted as courier to the whole party?"

"Yes, sir," says Bedford. "We had the carriage, and of course poor Mrs. L. was sent home by sea, and I brought home the young ones, and—and the rest of the family. I could say, Avanti! avanti! to the Italian postilions, and ask for des chevaux when we crossed the Halps—the Alps,—I beg your pardon, sir."

"And you used to see the party to their rooms at the inns, and call them up in the morning, and you had a blunderbuss in the rumble to shoot the robbers?"

"Yes," says Bedford.

"And it was a pleasant time?"

"Yes," says Bedford, groaning and hanging down his miserable head. "Oh, yes, it was a pleasant time."

He turned away; he stamped his foot; he gave a sort of imprecation; he pretended to look at some books, and dust them with a napkin which he carried. I saw the matter at once. "Poor Dick!" says I.

"It's the old—old story," says Dick. "It's you and the Hirish girl over again, sir. I'm only a servant, I know; but I'm a——. Confound it!" And here he stuck his fists into his eyes.

"And this is the reason you allow old Mrs. Prior to steal the sherry and the sugar?" I ask.

"How do you know that?—you remember how she prigged in Beak Street?" asks Bedford, fiercely.

"I overheard you and her just before dinner," I said.

"You had better go and tell Lovel—have me turned out of the house. That's the best thing that can be done," cries Bedford again, fiercely, stamping his feet.

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"It is always my custom to do as much mischief as I possibly can, Dick Bedford," I say, with fine irony.

He seizes my hand. "No, you're a trump—everybody knows that; beg pardon, sir; but you see I'm so—so—dash! —miserable, that I hardly know whether I'm walking on my head or my heels."

"You haven't succeeded in touching her heart, then, my poor Dick?" I said.

Dick shook his head. "She has no heart," he said. "If she ever had any, that fellar in India took it away with him. She don't care for anybody alive. She likes me as well as anyone. I think she appreciates me, you see, sir; she can't 'elp it—I'm blest if she can. She knows I am a better man than most of the chaps that come down here,—I am, if I wasn't a servant. If I were only an apothecary—like that grinning jackass who comes here from Barnes in his gig, and wants to marry her—she'd have me. She keeps him on, and encourages him—she can do that cleverly enough. And the old dragon fancies she is fond of him. Psha! Why am I making a fool of myself?—I am only a servant. Mary's good enough for me; *she'll* have me fast enough. I beg your pardon, sir; I am making a fool of myself; I ain't the first, sir. Good-night, sir; hope you'll sleep well." And Dick departs to his pantry and his private cares, and I think, "Here is another victim who is writhing under the merciless arrows of the universal torturer."

"He is a very singular person," Miss Prior remarked to me, as, next day, I happened to be walking on Putney Heath by her side, while her young charges trotted on and quarrelled in the distance. "I wonder where the world will stop next, dear Mr. Batchelor, and how far the march of intellect will proceed! Anyone so free, and easy, and cool, as this Mr. Bedford, I never saw. When we were abroad with poor Mrs. Lovel, he picked up French and Italian in quite a surprising way. He takes books down from the library now: the most abstruse works—works that *I* couldn't pretend to read, I'm sure. Mr. Bonnington says he has taught himself history, and Horace in Latin, and algebra, and I don't know what besides. He talked to the servants and tradespeople at

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Naples much better than *I* could, I assure you." And Elizabeth tosses up her head heavenwards, as if she would ask of yonder skies how such a man could possibly be as good as herself.

She stepped along the Heath—slim, stately, healthy, tall—her firm neat foot treading swiftly over the grass. She wore her blue spectacles, but I think she could have looked at the sun without the glasses and without wincing. That sun was playing with her tawny wavy ringlets, and scattering gold-dust over them.

"It is wonderful," said I, admiring her, "how these people give themselves airs, and try to imitate their betters!"

"Most extraordinary!" says Bessy. She had not one particle of humour in all her composition. I think Dick Bedford was right; and she had no heart. Well, she had famous lungs, health, appetite, and with these one may get through life not uncomfortably.

"You and Saint Cecilia got on pretty well, Bessy?" I ask.

"Saint who?"

"The late Mrs. L.

"Oh, Mrs. Lovel:—yes. What an odd person you are! I did not understand whom you meant," says Elizabeth the downright.

"Not a good temper, I should think! She and Fred fought?"

"*He* never fought."

"I think a little bird has told me that she was not averse to the admiration of our sex?"

"I don't speak ill of my friends, Mr. Batchelor," replies Elizabeth the prudent.

"You must have difficult work with the two old ladies at Shrublands?"

Bessy shrugs her shoulders. "A little management is necessary in all families," she says. "The ladies are naturally a little jealous one of the other; but they are both of them not unkind to me in the main; and I have to bear no more than other women in my situation. It was not all pleasure at St. Boniface, Mr. Batchelor, with my uncle and aunt. I suppose all governesses have their difficulties! and

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I must get over mine as best I can, and be thankful for the liberal salary which your kindness procured for me, and which enables me to help my poor mother and my brothers and sisters."

"I suppose you give all your money to her?"

"Nearly all. They must have it; poor Mamma has so many mouths to feed."

"And notre petit cœur, Bessy?" I ask, looking in her fresh face. "Have we replaced the Indian officer?"

Another shrug of the shoulders. "I suppose we all get over those follies, Mr. Batchelor. I remember somebody else was in a sad way too,"—and she looks askance at the victim of Glorvina. "*My* folly is dead and buried long ago. I have to work so hard for Mamma, and my brothers and sisters, that I have no time for such nonsense."

Here a gentleman in a natty gig, with a high-trotting horse, came spanking towards us over the common, and with my profound knowledge of human nature, I saw at once that the servant by the driver's side was a little doctor's boy, and the gentleman himself was a neat and trim general practitioner.

He stared at me grimly, as he made a bow to Miss Bessy. I saw jealousy and suspicion in his aspect.

"Thank you, dear Mr. Drencher," says Bessy, "for your kindness to Mamma and our children. You are going to call at Shrublands? Lady Baker was indisposed this morning. She says when she can't have Doctor Piper, there's nobody like you." And this artful one smiles blandly on Mr. Drencher.

"I have got the workhouse, and a case at Roehampton, and I shall be at Shrublands *about two*, Miss Prior," says that young Doctor, whom Bedford had called a grinning jackass. He laid an eager emphasis on the *two*. Go to! I know what two and two mean as well as most people, Mr. Drencher! Glances of rage he shot at me from out his gig. The serpents of that miserable Æsculapius unwound themselves from his rod, and were gnawing at his swollen heart!

"He has a good practice, Mr. Drencher?" I ask, sly rogue as I am.

"He is very good to Mamma and our children. His practice with *them* does not profit him much," says Bessy.

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"And I suppose our walk will be over before two o'clock?" remarks that slyboots who is walking with Miss Prior.

"I hope so. Why, it is our dinner-time; and this walk on the Heath does make one so hungry!" cries the governess.

"Bessy Prior," I said, "it is my belief that you no more want spectacles than a cat in the twilight." To which she replied, that I was such a strange odd man, she really could not understand me.

We were back at Shrublands at two. Of course we must not keep the children's dinner waiting: and of course Mr. Drencher drove up at five minutes past two, with his gig-horse all in a lather. I, who knew the secrets of the house, was amused to see the furious glances which Bedford darted from the sideboard, or as he served the Doctor with cutlets. Drencher, for his part, scowled at me. I, for my part, was easy, witty, pleasant, and I trust profoundly wicked and malicious. I bragged about my aristocratic friends to Lady Baker. I trumped her old-world stories about George the Fourth at Dublin with the latest dandified intelligence I had learned at the Club. That the young Doctor should be dazzled and disgusted was, I own, my wish; and I enjoyed his rage as I saw him choking with jealousy over his victuals.

But why was Lady Baker sulky with me? How came it, my fashionable stories had no effect upon that polite matron? Yesterday at dinner she had been gracious enough: and turning her back upon those poor simple Bonningtons, who knew nothing of the *beau monde* at all, had condescended to address herself specially to me several times with an "I need not tell *you*, Mr. Batchelor, that the Duchess of Dorsetshire's maiden name was De Bobus;" or, "You know very well that the etiquette at the Lord Lieutenant's balls, at Dublin Castle, is for the wives of baronets to"—&c. &c.

Now whence, I say, did it arise that Lady Baker, who had been kind and familiar with me on Sunday, should on Monday turn me a shoulder as cold as that lamb which I offered to carve for the family, and which remained from yesterday's quarter? I had thought of staying but two days at Shrublands. I generally am bored at country-houses. I was going away on the Monday morning, but Lovel, when he and I and the

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children and Miss Prior breakfasted together before he went to business, pressed me to stay so heartily and sincerely that I agreed, gladly enough, to remain. I could finish a scene or two of my tragedy at my leisure; besides, there were one or two little comedies going on in the house which inspired me with no little curiosity.

Lady Baker growled at me, then, during lunch-time. She addressed herself in whispers and hints to Mr. Drencher. She had in her own man, Bulkeley, and bullied him. She desired to know whether she was to have the barouche or not; and when informed that it was at her Ladyship's service, said it was a great deal too cold for the open carriage, and that she would have the brougham. When she was told that Mr. and Mrs. Bonnington had impounded the brougham, she said she had no idea of people taking other people's carriages: and when Mr. Bedford remarked that her Ladyship had her choice that morning, and had chosen the barouche, she said, "I didn't speak to you, sir; and I will thank you not to address me until you are spoken to!" She made the place so hot that I began to wish I had quitted it.

"And pray, Miss Prior, where is Captain Baker to sleep," she asked, "now that the ground-floor room is engaged?"

Miss Prior meekly said, "Captain Baker would have the pink room."

"The room on my landing-place, without double doors? Impossible! Clarence is always smoking. Clarence will fill the whole house with his smoke. He shall *not* sleep in the pink room. I expected the ground-floor room for him, which —a—this gentleman persists in not vacating." And the dear creature looked me full in the face.

"This gentleman smokes, too, and is so comfortable where he is, that he proposes to remain there," I say with a bland smile.

"Haspic of plovers' eggs, sir," says Bedford, handing a dish over my back. And he actually gave me a little dig, and growled, "Go it—give it her!"

"There is a capital inn on the Heath," I continue, peeling one of my opal favourites. "If Captain Baker must smoke, he may have a room there."

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"Sir! my son does not live at inns," cries Lady Baker.

"Oh, Grandma! don't he though? And wasn't there a row at the 'Star and Garter;' and didn't Pa pay Uncle Clarence's bill there, though?"

"Silence, Popham! Little boys should be seen and not heard," says Cissy. "Shouldn't little boys be seen and not heard, Miss Prior?"

"They shouldn't insult their grandmothers. O my Cecilia—my Cecilia!" cries Lady Baker, lifting her hand.

"You shan't hit me! I say you shan't hit me!" roars Pop, starting back, and beginning to square at his enraged ancestress. The scene was growing painful. And there was that rascal of a Bedford choking with suppressed laughter at the sideboard. Bulkeley, her Ladyship's man, stood calm as fate; but young Buttons burst out in a guffaw; on which, I assure you, Lady Baker looked as savage as Lady Macbeth.

"Am I to be insulted by my daughter's servants?" cries Lady Baker. "I will leave the house this instant."

"At what hour will your Ladyship have the barouche?" says Bedford, with perfect gravity.

If Mr. Drencher had whipped out a lancet and bled Lady B—— on the spot, he would have done her good. I shall draw the curtain over this sad—this humiliating scene. Drop, little curtain! on this absurd little act.

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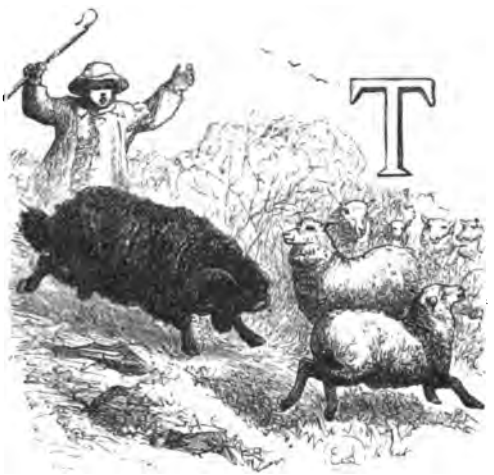
CHAPTER IV.

A BLACK SHEEP.



THE being for whom my friend Dick Bedford seemed to have a special contempt and aversion, was Mr. Bulkeley, the tall footman in attendance upon Lovel's dear mother-in-law. One of the causes of Bedford's wrath, the worthy fellow explained to me. In the servants' hall, Bulkeley was in the habit of speaking in disrespectful and satirical terms of his mistress, enlarging upon her many foibles, and describing her pecuniary difficulties to the many *habitués* of that second social circle at Shrublands. The hold which Mr. Bulkeley had over his lady lay in a long unsettled account of wages, which her Ladyship was quite disinclined to discharge. And, in spite of this insolvency, the footman must have found his profit in the place, for he continued to hold it from year to year, and to fatten on his earnings, such as they were. My Lady's dignity did not allow her to travel without this huge personage in her train; and a great comfort it must

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have been to her, to reflect that in all the country-houses which she visited (and she would go wherever she could force an invitation), her attendant freely explained himself regarding her peculiarities, and made his brother servants aware of his mistress's embarrassed condition. And yet the woman, whom I suppose no soul alive respected (unless, haply, she herself had a hankering delusion that she was a respectable woman), thought that her position in life forbade her to move abroad without a maid, and this hulking incumbrance in plush; and never was seen anywhere, in watering-place, country-house, hotel, unless she was so attended.

Between Bedford and Bulkeley, then, there was feud and mutual hatred. Bedford chafed the big man by constant sneers and sarcasms, which penetrated the other's dull hide, and caused him frequently to assert that he would punch Dick's ugly head off. The housekeeper had frequently to interpose, and fling her matronly arms between these men of war; and perhaps Bedford was forced to be still at times, for Bulkeley was nine inches taller than himself, and was perpetually bragging of his skill and feats as a bruiser. This sultan may also have wished to fling his pocket-handkerchief to Miss Mary Pinhorn, who, though she loved Bedford's wit and cleverness, might also be not insensible to the magnificent chest, calves, whiskers, of Mr. Bulkeley. On this delicate subject, however, I can't speak. The men hated each other. You have, no doubt, remarked in your experience of life, that when men *do* hate each other, about a woman, or some other cause, the real reason is never assigned. You say, "The conduct of such and such a man to his grandmother—his behaviour in selling that horse to Benson—his manner of brushing his hair down the middle"—or what you will, "makes him so offensive to me that I can't endure him." His verses, therefore, are mediocre; his speeches in Parliament are utter failures; his practice at the bar is dwindling every year; his powers (always small) are utterly leaving him, and he is repeating his confounded jokes until they quite nauseate. Why, only about myself, and within these three days, I read a nice little article—written in sorrow, you know, not in anger—by our eminent *confrère* Wiggins, deploring the

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decay of &c. &c. And Wiggins's little article which was not found suitable for a certain Magazine?—*Allons donc!* The drunkard says the pickled salmon gave him the headache; the man who hates us gives *a* reason, but not *the* reason. Bedford was angry with Bulkeley for abusing his mistress at the servants' table? Yes. But for what else besides? I don't care—nor possibly does your worship, the exalted reader, for these low vulgar kitchen quarrels.

Out of that ground-floor room, then, I would not move in spite of the utmost efforts of my Lady Baker's broad shoulder to push me out; and with many grins that evening, Bedford complimented me on my gallantry in routing the enemy at luncheon. I think he may possibly have told his master, for Lovel looked very much alarmed and uneasy when we greeted each other on his return from the City, but became more composed when Lady Baker appeared at the second dinner-bell, without a trace on her fine countenance of that storm which had caused all her waves to heave with such commotion at noon. How finely some people, by the way, can hang up quarrels—or pop them into a drawer—as they do their work, when dinner is announced, and take them out again at a convenient season! Baker was mild, gentle, a thought sad and sentimental—tenderly interested about her dear son and daughter in Ireland, whom she *must* go and see—quite easy in hand, in a word, and to the immense relief of all of us. She kissed Lovel on retiring, and prayed blessings on her Frederick. She pointed to the picture: nothing could be more melancholy or more gracious.

"*She* go!" says Mr. Bedford to me at night—"not she. She knows when she's well off; was obliged to turn out of Bakerstown before she came here: that brute Bulkeley told me so. She's always quarrelling with her son and his wife. Angels don't grow everywhere as they do at Putney, Mr. B.! You gave it her well to-day at lunch, you did though!" During my stay at Shrublands, Mr. Bedford paid me a regular evening visit in my room, set the *carte du pays* before me, and in his curt way acquainted me with the characters of the inmates of the house, and the incidents occurring therein.

Captain Clarence Baker did not come to Shrublands on

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the day when his anxious mother wished to clear out my nest (and expel the amiable bird in it) for her son's benefit. I believe an important fight, which was to come off in the Essex Marshes, and which was postponed in consequence of the interposition of the county magistrates, was the occasion, or at any rate the pretext, of the Captain's delay. "He likes seeing fights better than going to 'em, the Captain does," my major-domo remarked. "His regiment was ordered to India, and he sold out: climate don't agree with his precious health. The Captain ain't been here ever so long, not since poor Mrs. L.'s time, before Miss P. came here: Captain Clarence and his sister had a tremendous quarrel together. He was up to all sorts of pranks, the Captain was. Not a good lot, by any means, I should say, Mr. Batchelor." And here Bedford begins to laugh. "Did you ever read, sir, a farce called 'Raising the Wind'? There's plenty of Jeremy Diddlers now, Captain Jeremy Diddlers and Lady Jeremy Diddlers too. Have you such a thing as half-a-crown about you? If you have, don't invest it in some folks' pockets—that's all. Beg your pardon, sir, if I am bothering you with talking."

As long as I was at Shrublands, and ready to partake of breakfast with my kind host and his children and their governess, Lady Baker had her own breakfast taken to her room. But when there were no visitors in the house, she would come groaning out of her bedroom to be present at the morning meal; and not uncommonly would give the little company anecdotes of the departed saint, under whose invocation, as it were, we were assembled, and whose simpering effigy looked down upon us, over her harp, and from the wall. The eyes of the portrait followed you about, as portraits' eyes so painted will; and those glances, as it seemed to me, still domineered over Lovel, and made him quail as they had done in life. Yonder, in the corner, was Cecilia's harp, with its leathern cover. I likened the skin to that drum which the dying Zisca ordered should be made out of his hide, to be beaten before the hosts of his people and inspire terror. *Vous concevez*, I did not say to Lovel at breakfast, as I sat before the ghostly musical instrument, "My dear fellow, that

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skin of Cordovan leather belonging to your defunct Cecilia's harp is like the hide which," &c.; but I confess, at first, I used to have a sort of *crawly* sensation, as of a sickly genteel ghost flitting about the place, in an exceedingly peevish humour, trying to scold and command, and finding her defunct voice couldn't be heard—trying to re-illumine her extinguished leers and faded smiles and ogles, and finding no one admired or took note. In the grey of the gloaming, in the twilight corner where stands the shrouded companion of song—what is that white figure flickering round the silent harp? Once, as we were assembled in the room at afternoon tea, a bird, entering at the open window, perched on the instrument. Popham dashed at it. Lovel was deep in conversation upon the wine-duties with a Member of Parliament he had brought down to dinner. Lady Baker, who was, if I may use the expression, "jawing," as usual, and telling one of her tremendous stories about the Lord Lieutenant to Mr. Bonnington, took no note of the incident. Elizabeth did not seem to remark it: what was a bird on a harp to her, but a sparrow perched on a bit of leather-casing! All the ghosts in Putney churchyard might rattle all their bones, and would not frighten that stout spirit!

I was amused at a precaution which Bedford took, and somewhat alarmed at the distrust towards Lady Baker which he exhibited, when, one day on my return from town—whither I had made an excursion of four or five hours—I found my bedroom door locked, and Dick arrived with the key. "He's wrote to say he's coming this evening, and if he had come when you was away, Lady B. was capable of turning your things out, and putting his in, and taking her oath she believed you was going to leave. The long bows Lady B. do pull are perfectly awful, Mr. B.! So it was long-bow to long-bow, Mr. Batchelor; and I said you had took the key in your pocket, not wishing to have your papers disturbed. She tried the lawn window, but I had bolted that, and the Captain will have the pink room, after all, and must smoke up the chimney. I should have liked to see him, or you, or anyone do it in poor Mrs. L.'s time—I just should."

During my visit to London, I had chanced to meet my

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friend Captain Fitzb—dle, who belongs to a dozen Clubs, and knows something of every man in London. "Know anything of Clarence Baker? Of course I do," says Fitz; "and if you want any *renseignement*, my dear fellow, I have the honour to inform you that a blacker little sheep does not trot the London *pavé*. Wherever that ingenious officer's name is spoken—at Tattersall's, at his Clubs, in his late regiments, in men's society, in ladies' society, in that expanding and most agreeable circle which you may call no society at all—a chorus of maledictions rises up at the mention of Baker. Know anything of Clarence Baker? My dear fellow, enough to make your hair turn white, unless (as I sometimes fondly imagine) nature has already performed that process, when of course I can't pretend to act upon mere hair-dye." (The whiskers of the individual who addressed me, innocent, stared me in the face as he spoke, and were dyed of the most unblushing purple.) "Clarence Baker, sir, is a young man who would have been invaluable in Sparta as a warning against drunkenness and an exemplar of it. He has helped the regimental surgeon to some most interesting experiments in *delirium tremens*. He is known, and not in the least trusted, in every billiard-room in Brighton, Canterbury, York, Sheffield—on every pavement which has rung with the clink of dragoon boot-heels. By a wise system of revoking at whist he has lost games which have caused not only his partners, but his opponents and the whole Club, to admire him and to distrust him: long before and since he was of age, he has written his eminent name to bills which have been dishonoured, and has nobly pleaded his minority as a reason for declining to pay. From the garrison towns where he has been quartered, he has carried away not only the hearts of the milliners, but their gloves, haberdashery, and perfumery. He has had controversies with Cornet Green regarding horse transactions; disputed turf accounts with Lieutenant Brown; and betting and backgammon differences with Captain Black. From all I have heard he is the worthy son of his admirable mother. And I bet you even on the four events, if you stay three days in a country-house with him—which appears to be your present happy idea—that he will quarrel with you, insult you and apologise; that he will

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intoxicate himself more than once; that he will offer to play cards with you, and not pay on losing (if he wins, I perhaps need not state what his conduct will be); and that he will try to borrow money from you, and most likely from your servant, before he goes away." So saying, the sententious Fitz strutted up the steps of one of his many club-haunts in Pall Mall, and left me forewarned, and I trust forearmed, against Captain Clarence and all his works.

The adversary, when at length I came in sight of him, did not seem very formidable. I beheld a weakly little man with Chinese eyes, and pretty little feet and hands, whose pallid countenance told of Finishes and Casinos. His little chest and fingers were decorated with many jewels. A perfume of tobacco hung round him. His little moustache was twisted with an elaborate gummy curl. I perceived that the little hand which twirled the moustache shook woefully: and from the little chest there came a cough surprisingly loud and dismal.

He was lying on a sofa as I entered, and the children of the house were playing round him. "If you are our uncle, why didn't you come to see us oftener?" asks Popham.

"How should I know that you were such uncommonly nice children?" asked the Captain.

"We're not nice to you," says Popham. "Why do you cough so? Mamma used to cough. And why does your hand shake so?"

"My hand shakes because I am ill: and I cough because I'm ill. Your mother died of it, and I dare say I shall too."

"I hope you'll be good, and repent before you die, Uncle, and I will lend you some nice books," says Cecilia.

"Oh, bother books!" cries Pop.

"And I hope *you'll* be good, Popham," and "You hold *your* tongue, miss," and "I shall," and "I shan't," and "You're another," and "I'll tell Miss Prior,"—"Go and tell, telltale,"—"Boo"—"Boo"—"Boo"—"Boo"—and I don't know what more exclamations came tumultuously and rapidly from these dear children, as their uncle lay before them, a handkerchief to his mouth, his little feet high raised on the sofa cushions.

Captain Baker turned a little eye towards me, as I entered

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the room, but did not change his easy and elegant posture. When I came near to the sofa where he reposed, he was good enough to call out—

"Glass of sherry!"

"It's Mr. Batchelor; it isn't Bedford, Uncle," says Cissy.

"Mr. Batchelor ain't got any sherry in his pocket: have you, Mr. Batchelor? You ain't like old Mrs. Prior, always pocketing things, are you?" cries Pop, and falls a-laughing at the ludicrous idea of my being mistaken for Bedford.

"Beg your pardon. How should I know, you know?" drawls the invalid on the sofa. "Everybody's the same now, you see."

"Sir!" say I, and "sir" was all I could say. The fact is, I could have replied with something remarkably neat and cutting, which would have transfixed the languid little jackanapes who dared to mistake me for a footman; but, you see, I only thought of my repartee some eight hours afterwards when I was lying in bed, and I am sorry to own that a great number of my best *bonmots* have been made in that way. So, as I had not the pungent remark ready when wanted, I can't say I said it to Captain Baker, but I dare say I turned very red, and said "Sir!" and—and in fact that was all.

"You were goin' to say somethin'?" asked the Captain, affably.

"You know my friend Mr. Fitzboodle, I believe?" said I; the fact is, I really did not know what to say.

"Some mistake—think not."

"He is a member of the 'Flag Club,'" I remarked, looking my young fellow hard in the face.

"I ain't. There's a set of cads in that Club that will say anything."

"You may not know him, sir, but he seemed to know you very well. Are we to have any tea, children?" I say, flinging myself down on an easy-chair, taking up a magazine, and adopting an easy attitude, though I dare say my face was as red as a turkey-cock's, and I was boiling over with rage.

As we had a very good breakfast and a profuse luncheon at Shrublands, of course we could not support nature till dinner-time without a five-o'clock tea; and this was the meal

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for which I pretended to ask. Bedford, with his silver kettle, and his buttony satellite, presently brought in this refection, and of course the children bawled out to him—

"Bedford—Bedford! Uncle mistook Mr. Batchelor for you."

"I could not be mistaken for a more honest man, Pop," said I. And the bearer of the tea-urn gave me a look of gratitude and kindness which, I own, went far to restore my ruffled equanimity.

"Since you are the butler, will you get me a glass of sherry and a biscuit?" says the Captain. And Bedford retiring, returned presently with the wine.

The young gentleman's hand shook so, that in order to drink his wine, he had to surprise it, as it were, and seize it with his mouth, when a shake brought the glass near his lips. He drained the wine and held out his hand for another glass. The hand was steadier now.

"You the man who was here before?" asks the Captain.

"Six years ago, when you were here, sir," says the butler.

"What! I ain't changed, I suppose?"

"Yes, you are, sir."

"Then, how the dooce do you remember me?"

"You forgot to pay me some money you borrowed of me, one pound five, sir," says Bedford, whose eyes slyly turned in my direction.

And here, according to her wont at this meal, the dark-robed Miss Prior entered the room. She was coming forward with her ordinarily erect attitude and firm step, but paused in her walk an instant, and when she came to us, I thought, looked remarkably pale. She made a slight curtsey, and it must be confessed that Captain Baker rose up from his sofa for a moment when she appeared. She then sat down, with her back towards him, turning towards herself the table and its tea apparatus.

At this board my Lady Baker found us assembled when she returned from her afternoon drive. She flew to her darling reprobate of a son. She took his hand, she smoothed back his hair from his damp forehead. "My darling child," cries this fond mother, "what a pulse you have got!"

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"I suppose, because I've been drinking," says the prodigal.

"Why didn't you come out driving with me? The afternoon was lovely!"

"To pay visits at Richmond? Not as I knows on, ma'am," says the invalid. "Conversation with elderly ladies about poodles, Bible societies, that kind of thing? It must be a doosid lovely afternoon that would make me like that sort of game." And here comes a fit of coughing, over which Mamma ejaculates her sympathy.

"Kick—kick—killin' myself!" gasps out the Captain; "know I am. No man *can* lead my life, and stand it. Dyin' by inches! Dyin' by whole yards, by Jo—ho—hove, I am!" Indeed, he was as bad in health as in morals, this graceless Captain.

"That man of Lovel's seems a d—— insolent beggar," he presently and ingenuously remarks.

"Oh, Uncle, you mustn't say those words!" cries niece Cissy.

"He's a man, and may say what he likes, and so will I, when I'm a man. Yes, and I'll say it now, too, if I like," cries Master Popham.

"Not to give me pain, Popham? Will you?" asks the governess.

On which the boy says—"Well, who wants to hurt you, Miss Prior?"

And our colloquy ends by the arrival of the man of the house from the City.

What I have admired in some dear women is their capacity for quarrelling and for reconciliation. As I saw Lady Baker hanging round her son's neck, and fondling his scanty ringlets, I remembered the awful stories with which in former days she used to entertain us regarding this reprobate. Her heart was pincushioned with his filial crimes. Under her chestnut front her Ladyship's real head of hair was grey, in consequence of his iniquities. His precocious appetite had devoured the greater part of her jointure. He had treated her many dangerous illnesses with indifference: had been the worst son, the worst brother, the most ill-conducted schoolboy, the most immoral young man—the terror of households, the Lovelace

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of garrison towns, the perverter of young officers; in fact, Lady Baker did not know how she supported existence at all under the agony occasioned by his crimes, and it was only from the possession of a more than ordinarily strong sense of religion that she was enabled to bear her burden.

The Captain himself explained these alternating maternal caresses and quarrels in his easy way.

"Saw how the old lady kissed and fondled me?" says he to his brother-in-law. "Quite refreshin', ain't it? Hang me, I thought she was goin' to send me a bit of sweetbread off her own plate. Came up to my room last night, wanted to tuck me up in bed, and abused my brother to me for an hour. You see, when I'm in favour, she always abuses Baker; when *he's* in favour she abuses me to him. And my sister-in-law, didn't she give it my sister-in-law! Oh! I'll trouble you. And poor Cecilia—why, hang me, Mr. Batchelor, she used to go on—this bottle's corked, I'm hanged if it isn't—to go on about Cecilia, and call her——Hullo!"

Here he was interrupted by our host, who said sternly—

"Will you please to forget those quarrels, or not mention them here? Will you have more wine, Batchelor?"

And Lovel rises, and haughtily stalks out of the room. To do Lovel justice, he had a great contempt and dislike for his young brother-in-law, which, with his best magnanimity, he could not at all times conceal.

So our host stalks towards the drawing-room, leaving Captain Clarence sipping wine.

"Don't go too," says the Captain. "He's a confounded rum fellow, my brother-in-law is. He's a confounded ill-conditioned fellow too. They always are, you know, these tradesmen fellows, these half-bred 'uns. I used to tell my sister so; but she *would* have him, because he had such lots of money, you know. And she threw over a fellar she was very fond of; and I told her she'd regret it. I told Lady B. she'd regret it. It was all Lady B.'s doing. She made Cissy throw the fellar over. He was a bad match, certainly, Tom Mountain was; and not a clever fellow, you know, or that sort of thing; but, at any rate, he was a gentleman, and better than a confounded sugar-baking beggar out of Ratcliff Highway."

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"You seem to find that claret very good," I remark, speaking, I may say, Socratically, to my young friend, who had been swallowing bumper after bumper.

"Claret good? Yes, doosid good!"

"Well, you see our confounded sugar-baker gives you his best."

"And why shouldn't he, hang him? Why, the fellow chokes with money. What does it matter to him how much he spends? You're a poor man, I dare say. You don't look as if you were overflush of money. Well, if *you* stood a good dinner, it would be all right—I mean it would show—you understand me, you know. But a sugar-baker with ten thousand a year, what does it matter to him, bottle of claret more —less?"

"Let us go in to the ladies," I say.

"Go in to mother! *I* don't want to go in to my mother," cries out the artless youth. "And I don't want to go in to the sugar-baker, hang him! and I don't want to go in to the children; and I'd rather have a glass of brandy-and-water with you, old boy. Here you! What's your name? Bedford! I owe you five-and-twenty shillings, do I, old Bedford? Give us a glass of Schnapps, and I'll pay you! Look here, Batchelor. I hate that sugar-baker. Two years ago, I drew a bill on him, and he wouldn't pay it—perhaps he would have paid it, but my sister wouldn't let him. And, I say, shall we go and have a cigar in your room? My mother's been abusing you to me like fun this morning. She abuses everybody. She used to abuse Cissy. Cissy used to abuse her—used to fight like two cats——"

And if I narrate this conversation, dear Spartan youth! if I show thee this Helot maundering in his cups, it is that from his odious example thou may'st learn to be moderate in the use of thine own. Has the enemy who has entered thy mouth ever stolen away thy brains? Has wine ever caused thee to blab secrets; to utter egotisms and follies? Beware of it. Has it ever been thy friend at the end of the hard day's work, the cheery companion of thy companions, the promoter of harmony, kindness, harmless social pleasure? Be thankful for it. Three years since, when the comet was blazing in

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the autumnal sky, I stood on the château-steps of a great claret proprietor. "Boirai-je de ton vin, O comète?" I said, addressing the luminary with the flaming tail. "Shall those generous bunches which you ripen yield their juices for me *morituro*?" It was a solemn thought. Ah! my dear brethren! who knows the Order of the Fates? When shall we pass the Gloomy Gates? Which of us goes, which of us waits to drink those famous Fifty-eights? A sermon, upon my word! And pray why not a little homily on an autumn eve over a purple cluster? . . . If that rickety boy had only drunk claret, I warrant you his tongue would not have blabbed, his hand would not have shaken, his wretched little brain and body would not have reeled with fever.

"'Gad," said he next day to me, "cut again last night. Have an idea that I abused Lovel. When I have a little wine on board, always speak my mind, don't you know? Last time I was here in my poor sister's time, said somethin' to her, don't quite know what it was, somethin' confoundedly true and unpleasant I dare say. I think it was about a fellow she used to go on with before she married the sugar-baker. And I got orders to quit, by Jove, sir—neck and crop, sir, and no mistake! And we gave it one another over the stairs. Oh, my! we did pitch in!—and that was the last time I ever saw Cecilia—give you my word. A doosid unforgiving woman my poor sister was, and between you and me, Batchelor, as great a flirt as ever threw a fellar over. You should have heard her and my Lady B. go on, that's all!—Well, Mamma, are you going out for a drive in the coachy-poachy?—Not as I knows on, thank you, as I before had the honour to observe. Mr. Batchelor and me are going to play a little game at billiards." We did, and I won; and, from that day to this, have never been paid my little winnings.

On the day after the doughty Captain's arrival, Miss Prior, in whose face I had remarked a great expression of gloom and care, neither made her appearance at breakfast nor at the children's dinner. "Miss Prior was a little unwell," Lady Baker said, with an air of most perfect satisfaction. "Mr. Drencher will come to see her this afternoon, and prescribe for her, I dare say," adds her Ladyship, nodding and

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winking a roguish eye at me. I was at a loss to understand what was the point of humour which amused Lady B., until she herself explained it.

"My good sir," she said, "I think Miss Prior is not at all *averse* to being ill." And the nods recommenced.

"As how?" I ask.

"To being ill, or at least to calling in the medical man."

"Attachment between governess and Sawbones I make bold for to presume?" says the Captain.

"Precisely, Clarence—a very fitting match. I saw the affair, even before Miss Prior owned it—that is to say, she has not denied it. She says she can't afford to marry, that she has children enough at home in her brothers and sisters. She is a well-principled young woman, and does credit, Mr. Batchelor, to your recommendation, and the education she has received from her uncle, the Master of St. Boniface."

"Cissy to school; Pop to Eton; and Miss What-d'you-call to grind the pestle in Sawbones's back-shop: I see!" says Captain Clarence. "He seems a low vulgar blackguard, that Sawbones."

"Of course, my love, what can you expect from that sort of person?" asks Mamma, whose own father was a small attorney in a small Irish town.

"I wish I had his confounded good health," cries Clarence, coughing.

"My poor darling!" says Mamma.

I said nothing. And so Elizabeth was engaged to that great broad-shouldered, red-whiskered young surgeon with the huge appetite and the dubious *h*'s! Well, why not? What was it to me? Why shouldn't she marry him? Was he not an honest man, and a fitting match for her? Yes. Very good. Only if I *do* love a bird or flower to glad me with its dark blue eye, it is the first to fade away. If I *have* a partiality for a young gazelle, it is the first to——psha! What have I to do with this namby-pamby? Can the heart that has truly loved ever forget, and doesn't it as truly love on to the——stuff! I am past the age of such follies. I might have made a woman happy: I think I should. But the fugacious years have lapsed, my Posthumus! My waist is now a

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good bit wider than my chest, and it is decreed that I shall be alone!

My tone, then, when next I saw Elizabeth, was sorrowful—not angry. Drencher, the young doctor, came punctually enough, you may be sure, to look after his patient. Little Pinhorn, the children's maid, led the young practitioner smiling towards the schoolroom regions. His creaking high-lows sprang swiftly up the stairs. I happened to be in the hall, and surveyed him with a grim pleasure. "Now he is in the schoolroom," I thought. "Now he is taking her hand—it is very white—and feeling her pulse. And so on, and so on. Surely, surely, Pinhorn remains in the room?" I am sitting on a hall-table as I muse plaintively on these things, and gaze up the stairs by which the Hakeem (great carroty-whiskered cad!) has passed into the sacred precincts of the harem. As I gaze up the stair, another door opens into the hall; a scowling face peeps through that door, and looks up the stair, too. 'Tis Bedford, who has slid out of his pantry, and watches the Doctor. And thou, too, my poor Bedford! Oh! the whole world throbs with vain heart-pangs, and tosses and heaves with longing unfulfilled desires! All night, and all over the world, bitter tears are dropping as regular as the dew, and cruel memories are haunting the pillow. Close my hot eyes, kind Sleep! Do not visit it, dear delusive images out of the Past! Often your figure shimmers through my dreams, Glorvina. Not as you are now, the stout mother of many children—you always had an alarming likeness to your own mother, Glorvina—but as you were—slim, black-haired, blue-eyed—when your carnation lips warbled the "Vale of Avoca" or the "Angel's Whisper." "What!" I say then, looking up the stair, "am I absolutely growing jealous of yon apothecary?—O fool!" And at this juncture, out peers Bedford's face from the pantry, and I see he is jealous too. I tie my shoe as I sit on the table; I don't affect to notice Bedford in the least (who, in fact, pops his own head back again as soon as he sees mine). I take my wideawake from the peg, set it on one side of my head, and strut whistling out of the hall-door. I stretch over Putney Heath, and my spirit resumes its tranquillity.

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I sometimes keep a little journal of my proceedings, and on referring to its pages, the scene rises before me pretty clearly to which the brief notes allude. On this day I find noted :—

"*Friday, July* 14.

"B. came down to-day. Seems to require a great deal of attendance from Dr. ——. Row between dowagers after dinner."

"B.," I need not remark, is Bessy. "Dr.," of course, you know. "Row between dowagers" means a battle royal between Mrs. Bonnington and Lady Baker, such as not unfrequently raged under the kindly Lovel's roof.

Lady Baker's gigantic menial Bulkeley condescended to wait at the family dinner at Shrublands, when perforce he had to put himself under Mr. Bedford's orders. Bedford would gladly have dispensed with the London footman, over whose calves, he said, he and his boy were always tumbling; but Lady Baker's dignity would not allow her to part from her own man; and her good-natured son-in-law allowed her, and indeed almost all other persons, to have their own way. I have reason to fear Mr. Bulkeley's morals were loose. Mrs. Bonnington had a special horror of him; his behaviour in the village public-houses, where his powder and plush were for ever visible—his freedom of conduct and conversation before the good lady's nurse and parlour-maids—provoked her anger and suspicion. More than once, she whispered to me her loathing of this flour-besprinkled monster; and, as much as such a gentle creature could, she showed her dislike to him by her behaviour. The flunkey's solemn equanimity was not to be disturbed by any such feeble indications of displeasure. From his powdered height, he looked down upon Mrs. Bonnington, and her esteem or her dislike was beneath him.

Now on this Friday night the 14th, Captain Clarence had gone to pass the day in town, and our Bessy made her appearance again, the Doctor's prescriptions having, I suppose, agreed with her. Mr. Bulkeley, who was handing coffee to the ladies, chose to offer none to Miss Prior, and I was amused when I saw Bedford's heel scrunch down on the flunkey's

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right foot, as he pointed towards the governess. The oaths which Bulkeley had to devour in silence must have been frightful. To do the gallant fellow justice, I think he would have died rather than speak before company in a drawing-room. He limped up and offered the refreshment to the young lady, who bowed and declined it.

"Frederick," Mrs. Bonnington begins, when the coffee ceremony is over, "now the servants are gone, I must scold you about the waste at your table, my dear. What was the need of opening that great bottle of champagne? Lady Baker only takes two glasses. Mr. Batchelor doesn't touch it." (No, thank you, my dear Mrs. Bonnington: too old a stager.) "Why not have a little bottle instead of that great, large, immense one? Bedford is a teetotaller. I suppose it is *that London footman who likes it.*"

"My dear mother, I haven't really ascertained his tastes," says Lovel.

"Then why not tell Bedford to open a pint, dear?" pursues Mamma.

"Oh, Bedford—Bedford, we must not mention *him*, Mrs. Bonnington!" cries Lady Baker. "Bedford is faultless. Bedford has the keys of everything. Bedford is not to be controlled in anything. Bedford is to be at liberty to be rude to my servant."

"Bedford was admirably kind in his attendance on your daughter, Lady Baker," says Lovel, his brow darkening; "and as for your man, I should think he was big enough to protect himself from any rudeness of poor Dick!" The good fellow had been angry for one moment, at the next he was all for peace and conciliation.

Lady Baker puts on her superfine air. With that air she had often awe-stricken good simple Mrs. Bonnington; and she loved to use it whenever City folk or humble people were present. You see she thought herself your superior and mine, as *de par le monde* there are many artless Lady Bakers who do. "My dear Frederick!" says Lady B. then, putting on her best Mayfair manner, "excuse me for saying, but you don't know the—the class of servant to which Bulkeley belongs. I had him as a great favour from Lord Toddleby's.

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That—that class of servant is not generally accustomed to go out single."

"Unless they are two behind a carriage-perch they pine away, I suppose," remarks Mr. Lovel, "as one love-bird does without his mate."

"No doubt—no doubt," says Lady B., who does not in the least understand him; "I only say you are not accustomed here—in this kind of establishment, you understand—to that class of——"

But here Mrs. Bonnington could contain her wrath no more. "Lady Baker!" cries that injured mother, "is my son's establishment not good enough for any powdered wretch in England? Is the house of a British merchant——"

"My dear creature—my dear creature!" interposes her Ladyship, "it *is* the house of a British merchant, and a most comfortable house too."

"Yes, *as you find it*," remarks Mamma.

"Yes, as I find it, when I come to take care of that *departed angel's children*, Mrs. Bonnington!"—(Lady B. here indicates the Cecilian effigy)—"of that dear seraph's orphans, Mrs. Bonnington! *You* cannot. You have other duties—other children—a husband, whom you have left at home in delicate health, and who——"

"Lady Baker!" exclaims Mrs. Bonnington, "no one shall say I don't take care of my dear husband!"

"My dear Lady Baker!—my dear—dear mother!" cries Lovel, *éploré*, and whimpers aside to me, "They spar in this way every night, when we're alone. It's too bad, ain't it, Batch?"

"I say you *do* take care of Mr. Bonnington," Baker blandly resumes (she has hit Mrs. Bonnington on the raw place, and smilingly proceeds to thong again): "I say you *do* take care of your husband, my dear creature, and that is why you can't attend to Frederick! And as he is of a very easy temper,—except sometimes with his poor Cecilia's mother,—he allows all his tradesmen to cheat him; all his servants to cheat him; Bedford to be rude to everybody; and if to me, why not to my servant Bulkeley, with whom Lord Toddleby's groom of the chambers gave me the very highest character?"

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Mrs. Bonnington in a great flurry broke in by saying she was surprised to hear that noblemen *had* grooms in their chambers: and she thought they were much better in the stables: and when they dined with Captain Huff, you know, Frederick, *his* man always brought such a dreadful smell of the stable in with him, that—— Here she paused. Baker's eye was on her; and that dowager was grinning a cruel triumph.

"He!—he! You mistake, my good Mrs. Bonnington!" says her Ladyship. "Your poor mother mistakes, my dear Frederick. You have lived in a quiet and most respectable sphere, but not, you understand, not——"

"Not what, pray, Lady Baker? We have lived in this neighbourhood twenty years: in my late husband's time, when *we saw a great deal of company*, and this dear Frederick was a boy at Westminster School. And we have *paid* for everything we have had for twenty years; and we have not owed a penny to any *tradesman*. And we may not have had *powdered footmen*, six feet high, impertinent beasts, who were rude to all the maids in the place. Don't—I *will* speak, Frederick! But servants who loved us, and who were *paid their wages*, and who—o—ho—ho—ho!"

Wipe your eyes, dear friends! out with all your pocket-handkerchiefs. I protest I cannot bear to see a woman in distress. Of course Fred Lovel runs to console his dear old mother, and vows Lady Baker meant no harm.

"Meant harm! My dear Frederick, what harm can I mean? I only said your poor mother did not seem to know what a groom of the chambers was! How should she?"

"Come—come," says Frederick, "enough of this! Miss Prior, will you be so kind as to give us a little music?"

Miss Prior was playing Beethoven at the piano, very solemnly and finely, when our Black Sheep returned to this quiet fold, and, I am sorry to say, in a very riotous condition. The brilliancy of his eye, the purple flush on his nose, the unsteady gait, and uncertain tone of voice, told tales of Captain Clarence, who stumbled over more than one chair before he found a seat near me.

"Quite right, old boy," says he, winking at me. "Cut again—dooshid good fellosh. Better than being along with

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you shtoopid-old-fogish." And he began to warble wild "Fol-de-rol-lols" in an insane accompaniment to the music.

"By heavens, this is too bad!" growls Lovel. "Lady Baker, let your big man carry your son to bed. Thank you, Miss Prior!"

At a final yell, which the unlucky young scapegrace gave, Elizabeth stopped, and rose from the piano, looking very pale. She made her curtsey, and was departing, when the wretched young Captain sprang up, looked at her, and sank back on the sofa with another wild laugh. Bessy fled away scared, and white as a sheet.

"TAKE THE BRUTE TO BED!" roars the master of the house, in great wrath. And scapegrace was conducted to his apartment, whither he went laughing wildly, and calling out, "Come on, old sh-sh-shugar-baker!"

The morning after this fine exhibition, Captain Clarence Baker's mamma announced to us that her poor dear suffering boy was too ill to come to breakfast, and I believe he prescribed for himself devilled drumstick and soda-water, of which he partook in his bedroom. Lovel, seldom angry, was violently wroth with his brother-in-law; and, almost always polite, was at breakfast scarcely civil to Lady Baker. I am bound to say that female abused her position. She appealed to Cecilia's picture a great deal too much during the course of breakfast. She hinted, she sighed, she waggled her head at me, and spoke about "that angel" in the most tragic manner. Angel is all very well; but your angel brought in *à tout propos*; your departed blessing called out of her grave ever so many times a day; when Grandmamma wants to carry a point of her own; when the children are naughty, or noisy; when Papa betrays a flickering inclination to dine at his Club, or to bring home a bachelor friend or two to Shrublands;—I say your angel always dragged in by the wings into the conversation loses her effect. No man's heart put on wider crape than Lovel's at Cecilia's loss. Considering the circumstances, his grief was most creditable to him: but at breakfast, at lunch, about Bulkeley the footman, about the barouche or the phaeton, or any trumpery domestic perplexity, to have a *Deus intersit* was too much. And I observed, with some inward satisfaction,

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that when Baker uttered her pompous funereal phrases, rolled her eyes up to the ceiling, and appealed to that quarter, the children ate their jam and quarrelled and kicked their little shins under the table, Lovel read his paper and looked at his watch to see if it was omnibus time; and Bessy made the tea, quite undisturbed by the old lady's tragical prattle.

When Baker described her son's fearful cough and dreadfully feverish state, I said, "Surely, Lady Baker, *Mr. Drencher* had better be sent for;" and I suppose I uttered the disgusting dissyllable Drencher with a fine sarcastic accent; for once, just once, Bessy's grey eyes rose through the spectacles and met mine with a glance of unutterable sadness, then calmly settled down on to the slop-basin again, or the urn, in which her pale features, of course, were odiously distorted.

"You will not bring anybody home to dinner, Frederick, in my poor boy's state?" asks Lady B.

"He may stay in his bedroom I suppose," replies Lovel.

"He is Cecilia's brother, Frederick!" cries the Lady.

"Conf——" Lovel was beginning. What was he about to say?

"If you are going to confound your angel in heaven, I have nothing to say, sir!" cries the mother of Clarence.

"Parbleu, madame!" cried Lovel, in French; "if he were not my wife's brother, do you think I would let him stay here?"

"Parly Français? Oui, oui, oui!" cries Pop. "I know what Pa means!"

"And so do *I* know. And I shall lend Uncle Clarence some books which Mr. Bonnington gave me, and——"

"Hold your tongue all!" shouts Lovel, with a stamp of his foot.

"You will, perhaps, have the great kindness to allow me the use of your carriage—or, at least, to wait here until my poor suffering boy can be moved, Mr. Lovel?" says Lady B., with the airs of a martyr.

Lovel rang the bell. "The carriage for Lady Baker—at her Ladyship's hour, Bedford: and the cart for her luggage. Her Ladyship and Captain Baker are going away."

"I have lost one child, Mr. Lovel, whom some people seem

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to forget. I am not going to murder another! I will not leave this house, sir, *unless you drive me from it by force*, until the medical man has seen my boy!" And here she and sorrow sat down again. She was always giving warning. She was always fitting the halter and traversing the cart, was Lady B., but she for ever declined to drop the handkerchief and have the business over. I saw by a little shrug in Bessy's shoulders what the governess's views were of the matter: and, in a word, Lady B. no more went away on this day, than she had done on forty previous days when she announced her intention of going. She would accept benefits, you see, but then she insulted her benefactors, and so squared accounts.

That great healthy, florid, scarlet-whiskered medical wretch came at about twelve, saw Mr. Baker and prescribed for him: and *of course* he must have a few words with Miss Prior, and inquire into the state of her health. Just as on the previous occasion, I happened to be in the hall when Drencher went upstairs; Bedford happened to be looking out of his pantry-door: I burst into a yell of laughter when I saw Dick's livid face—the sight somehow suited my savage soul.

No sooner was Medicus gone than Bessy, grave and pale, in bonnet and spectacles, came sliding downstairs. I do not mean down the banister, which was Pop's favourite method of descent; but slim, tall, noiseless, in a nunlike calm, she swept down the steps. Of course I followed her. And there was Master Bedford's nose peeping through the pantry-door at us, as we went out with the children. Pray, what business of *his* was it to be always watching anybody who walked with Miss Prior?

"So, Bessy," I said, "what report does Mr.—hem!—Mr. Drencher—give of the interesting invalid?"

"Oh, the most horrid! He says that Captain Baker has several times had a dreadful disease brought on by drinking, and that he is mad when he has it. He has delusions, sees demons, when he is in this state—wants to be watched."

"Drencher tells you everything?"

She says meekly: "He attends us when we are ill."

I remark, with fine irony: "He attends the whole family: he is always coming to Shrublands!"

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"He comes very often," Miss Prior says gravely.

"And do you mean to say, Bessy," I cry, madly cutting off two or three heads of yellow broom with my stick—"do you mean to say a fellow like that, who drops his *h*'s about the room, is a welcome visitor?"

"I should be very ungrateful if he were not welcome, Mr. Batchelor," says Miss Prior. "And call me by my surname, please—and he has taken care of all my family—and——"

"And, of course, of course, of course, Miss Prior!" say I, brutally; "and this is the way the world wags; and this is the way we are ill, and are cured; and we are grateful to the doctor that cures us!"

She nods her grave head. "You used to be kinder to me once, Mr. Batchelor, in old days—in your—in my time of trouble! Yes, my dear, that is a beautiful bit of broom! Oh, what a fine butterfly!" (Cecilia scours the plain after the butterfly.) "You used to be kinder to me once—when we were both unhappy."

"I was unhappy," I say, "but I survived. I was ill, but I am now pretty well, thank you. I was jilted by a false heartless woman. Do you suppose there are no other heartless women in the world?" And I am confident, if Bessy's breast had not been steel, the daggers which darted out from my eyes would have bored frightful stabs in it.

But she shook her head, and looked at me so sadly that my eye-daggers tumbled down to the ground at once; for you see, though I am a jealous Turk, I am a very easily appeased jealous Turk; and if I had been Bluebeard, and my wife, just as I was going to decapitate her, had lifted up her head from the block, and cried a little, I should have dropped my scimitar, and said, "Come, come, Fatima, never mind for the present about that key and closet business, and I'll chop your head off some other morning." I say, Bessy disarmed me. Pooh! I say, women will make a fool of me to the end. Ah! ye gracious Fates! Cut my thread of life ere it grow too long. Suppose I were to live till seventy, and some little wretch of a woman were to set her cap at me? She would catch me—I know she would. All the males of our family have been spoony

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and soft, to a degree perfectly ludicrous and despicable to contemplate—— Well, Bessy Prior, putting a hand out, looked at me, and said—

"You are the oldest and best friend I have ever had, Mr. Batchelor—the only friend."

"Am I, Elizabeth?" I gasp, with a beating heart.

"Cissy is running back with a butterfly." (Our hands unlock.) "Don't you see the difficulties of my position? Don't you know that ladies are often jealous of governesses; and that unless—unless they imagined I was—I was favourable to Mr. Drencher, who is very good and kind—the ladies of Shrublands might not like my remaining alone in the house with—with—you understand?" A moment the eyes look over the spectacles: at the next, the meek bonnet bows down towards the ground.

I wonder did she hear the bump—bumping of my heart! O heart!—O wounded heart! did I ever think thou wouldst bump—bump again? "Egl—Egl—izabeth," I say, choking with emotion, "do, do, do you—te—tell me—you don't—don't—don't—lo—love that apothecary?"

She shrugs her shoulder—her charming shoulder.

"And if," I hotly continue, "if a gentleman—if a man of mature age certainly, but who has a kind heart and four hundred a year of his own—were to say to you, 'Elizabeth! will you bid the flowers of a blighted life to bloom again?—Elizabeth! will you soothe a wounded heart?'——"

"Oh, Mr. Batchelor!" she sighed, and then added quickly, "Please, don't take my hand. Here's Pop."

And that dear child (bless him!) came up at the moment, saying, "Oh, Miss Prior, look here! I've got such a jolly big toadstool!" And next came Cissy, with a confounded butterfly. O Richard the Third! Haven't you been maligned because you smothered two little nuisances in a Tower? What is to prove to me that you did not serve the little brutes right, and that you weren't a most humane man? Darling Cissy coming up, then, in her dear charming way, says, "You shan't take Mr. Batchelor's hand, you shall take *my* hand!" And she tosses up her little head, and walks with the instructress of her youth.

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"Ces enfants ne comprennent guère le Français," says Miss Prior, speaking very rapidly.

"Après lonche?" I whisper. The fact is, I was so agitated I hardly knew what the French for lunch was. And then our conversation dropped: and the beating of my own heart was all the sound I heard.

Lunch came. I couldn't eat a bit: I should have choked. Bessy ate plenty, and drank a glass of beer. It was her dinner, to be sure. Young *Blacksheep* did not appear. We did not miss him. When Lady Baker began to tell her story of George the Fourth at Slane Castle, I went into my own room. I took a book. Books? Psha! I went into the garden. I took out a cigar. But no, I would not smoke it. Perhaps she——many people don't like smoking.

I went into the garden. "Come into the garden, Maud." I sat by a large lilac-bush. I waited. Perhaps she would come? The morning-room windows were wide open on the lawn. Will she never come? Ah! what is that tall form advancing? gliding—gliding into the chamber like a beauteous ghost? "Who most does like an angel show, you may be sure 'tis she." She comes up to the glass. She lays her spectacles down on the mantelpiece. She puts a slim white hand over her auburn hair and looks into the mirror. Elizabeth, Elizabeth! I come!

As I came up, I saw a horrid little grinning, debauched face surge over the back of a great armchair and look towards Elizabeth. It was Captain Blacksheep, of course. He laid his elbows over the chair. He looked keenly and with a diabolical smile at the unconscious girl; and just as I reached the window, he cried out, "*Bessy Bellenden, by Jove!*"

Elizabeth turned round, gave a little cry, and —— but what happened I shall tell in the ensuing chapter.

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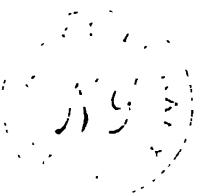
BESSY'S REFLECTIONS.



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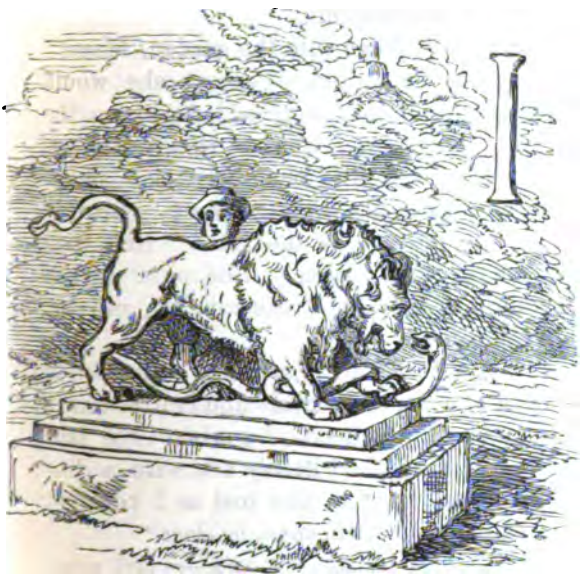
CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH I AM STUNG BY A SERPENT.



IF when I heard Baker call out Bessy Bellenden, and adjure Jove, he had run forward and seized Elizabeth by the waist, or offered her other personal indignity, I too should have run forward on my side and engaged him. Though I am a stout elderly man, short in stature and in wind, I know I am a match for *that* rickety little Captain on his high-heeled boots. A match for him? I believe Miss Bessy would have been a match for both of us. Her white arm was as hard and polished as ivory. Had she held it straight pointed against the rush of the dragoon, he would have fallen backwards before his intended prey: I have no doubt he would. It was the hen, in this case, was stronger

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than the libertine fox, and *au besoin* would have pecked the little marauding vermin's eyes out. Had, I say, Partlet been weak, and Reynard strong, I *would* have come forward: I certainly would. Had he been a wolf now, instead of a fox, I am certain I should have run in upon him, grappled with him, torn his heart and tongue out of his black throat, and trampled the lawless brute to death.

Well, I didn't do any such thing. I was just *going* to run in—and I didn't. I was just going to rush to Bessy's side to clasp her (I have no doubt) to my heart: to beard the whiskered champion who was before her, and perhaps say, "Cheer thee—cheer thee, my persecuted maiden, my beauteous love—my Rebecca! Come on, Sir Brian de Bois Guilbert, thou dastard Templar! It is I, Sir Wilfrid of Ivanhoe." (By the way, though the fellow was not a *Templar*, he was a *Lincoln's-Inn-man*, having passed twice through the Insolvent Court there with infinite discredit.) But I made no heroic speeches. There was no need for Rebecca to jump out of window and risk her lovely neck. How could she, in fact, the French window being flush with the ground-floor? And I give you my honour, just as I was crying my war-cry, couching my lance, and rushing *à la rescousse* upon Sir Baker, a sudden thought made me drop my (figurative) point: a sudden idea made me rein in my galloping (metaphorical) steed and spare Baker for that time.

Suppose I had gone in? But for that sudden precaution, there might have been a Mrs. Batchelor. I might have been a bullied father of ten children. (Elizabeth has a fine high temper of her own.) What is four hundred and twenty a year, with a wife and perhaps half-a-dozen children? Should I have been a whit the happier? Would Elizabeth? Ah! no. And yet I feel a certain sort of shame, even now, when I think that I didn't go in. Not that I was in a fright, as some people choose to hint. I swear I was not. But the reason why I did not charge was this——

Nay, I *did* charge part of the way, and then, I own, stopped. It was an error in judgment. It wasn't a want of courage. Lord George Sackville was a brave man, and as cool as a cucumber under fire. Well, *he* didn't charge at the battle of

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Minden, and Prince Ferdinand made the deuce and all of a disturbance, as we know. Byng was a brave man,—and I ask, wasn't it a confounded shame executing him? So with respect to myself. Here is my statement. I make it openly. I don't care. I am accused of seeing a woman insulted, and not going to her rescue. I am not guilty, I say. That is, there were reasons which caused me not to attack. Even putting aside the superior strength of Elizabeth herself to the enemy,—I vow there were cogent and honourable reasons why I did not charge home.

You see I happened to be behind a blue lilac-bush (and was turning a rhyme—Heaven help us!—in which *death* was only to part me and Elizabeth) when I saw Baker's face surge over the chair-back. I rush forward as he cries "By Jove!" Had Miss Prior cried out on her part, the strength of twenty Heenans, I know, would have nerved this arm; but all she did was to turn pale, and say, "Oh, mercy! Captain Baker! Do pity me!"

"What! you remember me, Bessy Bellenden, do you?" asks the Captain, advancing.

"Oh, not that name! please, not that name!" cries Bessy.

"I thought I knew you yesterday," says Baker. "Only, gad, you see, I had so much claret on board, I did not much know what was what. And oh! Bessy, I have got such a splitter of a headache."

"Oh! please—please, my name is Miss Prior. Pray! pray, sir, don't——"

"You've got handsomer—doosid deal handsomer. Know you now well, your spectacles off. You come in here—teach my nephew and niece, humbug my sister, make love to the sh—— Oh! you uncommon sly little toad!"

"Captain Baker, I beg—I implore you," says Bessy, or something of the sort: for the white hands assumed an attitude of supplication.

"Pooh! don't gammon *me*!" says the rickety Captain (or words to that effect), and seizes those two firm white hands in his moist trembling palms.

Now do you understand why I paused? When the dandy came grinning forward, with looks and gestures of familiar

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recognition; when the pale Elizabeth implored him to spare her:—a keen arrow of jealousy shot whizzing through my heart, and caused me well-nigh to fall backwards as I ran forwards. I bumped up against a bronze group in the garden. The group represented a lion stung by a serpent. *I* was a lion stung by a serpent too. Even Baker could have knocked me down. Fiends and anguish! he had known her before. The Academy, the life she had led, the wretched old tipsy ineffective guardian of a father—all these antecedents in poor Bessy's history passed through my mind. And I had offered my heart and troth to this woman! Now, my dear sir, I appeal to you. What would *you* have done? Would *you* have liked to have such a sudden suspicion thrown over the being of your affection? "Oh! spare me—spare me!" I heard her say, in clear—too clear—pathetic tones. And then there came rather a shrill "Ah!" and then the lion was up in my breast again; and I give you my honour, just as I was going to step forward —to step?—to *rush* forward from behind the urn where I had stood for a moment with thumping heart, Bessy's "Ah!" or little cry was followed by a *whack*, which I heard as clear as anything I ever heard in my life;—and I saw the little Captain spin back, topple over a chair heels up, and in this posture heard him begin to scream and curse in shrill tones. . . .

Not for long, for as the Captain and the chair tumble down, a door springs open;—a man rushes in, who pounces like a panther upon the prostrate Captain, pitches into his nose and eyes, and chokes his bad language by sending a fist down his naughty throat.

"Oh! thank you, Bedford!—please, leave him, Bedford! that's enough. There, don't hurt him any more!" says Bessy, laughing—laughing, upon my word.

"Ah! will you?" says Bedford. "Lie still, you little beggar, or I'll knock your head off. Look here, Miss Prior?—Elizabeth—dear—dear Elizabeth! I love you with all my heart, and soul, and strength—I do."

"O Bedford! Bedford!" warbles Elizabeth.

"I do! I can't help it. I must say it! Ever since Rome, I do. Lie still, you drunken little beast! It's no use. But

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BEDFORD TO THE RESCUE.

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I adore you, O Elizabeth! Elizabeth!" And there was Dick, who was always following Miss P. about, and poking his head into keyholes to spy her, actually making love to her over the prostrate body of the Captain.

Now, what was I to do? Wasn't I in a most confoundedly awkward situation? A lady had been attacked—*a* lady?—*the* lady, and I hadn't rescued her. Her insolent enemy was overthrown, and I hadn't done it. A champion, three inches shorter than myself, had come in, and dealt the blow. I was in such a rage of mortification, that I should have liked to thrash the Captain and Bedford too. The first I know I could have matched: the second was a tough little hero. And it was he who rescued the damsel, whilst I stood by! In a strait so odious, sudden, and humiliating, what should I, what could I, what did I do?

Behind the lion and snake there is a brick wall and marble balustrade, built for no particular reason, but flanking three steps and a grassy terrace, which then rises up on a level to the house-windows. Beyond the balustrade is a shrubbery of more lilacs and so forth, by which you can walk round into another path, which also leads up to the house. So as I had not charged—ah! woe is me!—as the battle was over, I—I just went round that shrubbery into the other path, and so entered the house, arriving like Fortinbras in "Hamlet," when everybody is dead and sprawling, you know, and the whole business is done.

And was there to be no end to my shame, or to Bedford's laurels? In that brief interval, whilst I was walking round the bypath (just to give myself a pretext for entering coolly into the premises), this fortunate fellow had absolutely engaged another and larger champion. This was no other than Bulkeley, my Lady B.'s first-class attendant. When the Captain fell, amidst his screams and curses, he called for Bulkeley: and that individual made his appearance, with a little Scotch cap perched on his powdered head.

"Hullo! what's the row year?" says Goliath, entering.

"Kill that blackguard! Hang him, kill him!" screams Captain Blacksheep, rising with bleeding nose.

"I say, what's the row year?" asks the grenadier.

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"Off with your cap, sir, before a lady!" calls out Bedford.

"Hoff with my cap! you be blo——"

But he said no more, for little Bedford jumped some two feet from the ground, and knocked the cap off, so that a cloud of ambrosial powder filled the room with violet odours. The immense frame of the giant shook at this insult: "I will be the death on you, you little beggar!" he grunted out; and was advancing to destroy Dick, just as I entered in the cloud which his head had raised.

"I'll knock the brains as well as the powder out of your ugly head!" says Bedford, springing at the poker. At which juncture I entered.

"What—what is this disturbance?" I say, advancing with an air of mingled surprise and resolution.

"You git out of the way till I knock his 'ead off!" roars Bulkeley.

"Take up your cap, sir, and leave the room," I say, still with the same elegant firmness.

"Put down that there poker, you coward!" bellows the monster on board wages.

"Miss Prior!" I say (like a dignified hypocrite, as I own I was), "I hope no one has offered you a rudeness?" And I glare round, first at the knight of the bleeding nose, and then at his squire.

Miss Prior's face, as she replied to me, wore a look of awful scorn.

"Thank you, sir," she said, turning her head over her shoulder and looking at me with her grey eyes. "Thank you, Richard Bedford! God bless you! I shall ever be thankful to you, wherever I am." And the stately figure swept out of the room.

She had seen me behind that confounded statue, then, and I had not come to her! O torments and racks! O scorpions, fiends, and pitchforks! The face of Bedford, too (flashing with knightly gratitude anon as she spoke kind words to him and passed on), wore a look of scorn as he turned towards me, and then stood, his nostrils distended and breathing somewhat hard, glaring at his enemies, and still grasping his mace of battle.

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When Elizabeth was gone, there was a pause of a moment, and then Blacksheep, taking his bleeding cambric from his nose, shrieks out, "Kill him, I say! A fellow that dares to hit one in my condition, and when I'm down! Bulkeley, you great hulking jackass! kill him, I say!"

"Jest let him put that there poker down, that's hall," growls Bulkeley.

"You're afraid, you great cowardly beast! You shall go, Mr. What-d'ye-call-'im—Mr. Bedford—you shall have the sack, sir, as sure as your name is what it is! I'll tell my brother-in-law everything; and as for that woman——"

"If you say a word against her, I'll cane you wherever I see you, Captain Baker!" I cry out.

"Who spoke to *you*?" says the Captain, falling back and scowling at me.

"Who hever told you to put *your* foot in?" says the squire.

I was in such a rage, and so eager to find an object on which I might wreak my fury, that I confess I plunged at this Bulkeley. I gave him two most violent blows on the waistcoat, which caused him to double up with such frightful contortions, that Bedford burst out laughing; and even the Captain with the damaged eye and nose began to laugh too. Then, taking a lesson from Dick, as there was a fine shining dagger on the table, used for the cutting open of reviews and magazines, I seized and brandished this weapon, and I dare say would have sheathed it in the giant's bloated corpus, had he made any movement towards me. But he only called out, "hI'll be the death on you, you cowards! hI'll be the death of both on you!" and snatching up his cap from the carpet, walked out of the room.

"Glad you did that, though," says Baker, nodding his head. "Think I'd best pack up."

And now the Devil of Rage which had been swelling within me gave place to a worse devil—the Devil of Jealousy—and I turned on the Captain, who was also just about to slink away:—

"Stop!" I cried out—I screamed out, I may say.

"Who spoke to you, I should like to know? and who the

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dooce dares to speak to me in that sort of way?" says Clarence Baker, with a plentiful garnish of expletives, which need not be here inserted. But he stopped, nevertheless, and turned slouching round.

"You spoke just now of Miss Prior?" I said. "Have you anything against her?"

"What's that to you?" he asked.

"I am her oldest friend. I introduced her into this family. *Dare* you say a word against her?"

"Well, who the dooce has?"

"You knew her before?"

"Yes, I did, then."

"When she went by the name of Bellenden?"

"Of course I did. And what's that to you?" he screams out.

"I this day asked her to be my wife, sir! *That's* what it is to me!" I replied with severe dignity.

Mr. Clarence began to whistle. "Oh! if that's it—of course not!" he says.

The jealous demon writhed within me and rent me.

"You mean that there *is* something, then?" I asked, glaring at the young reprobate.

"No, I don't," says he, looking very much frightened. "No, there is nothin'. Upon my sacred honour, there isn't, that I know." (I was looking uncommonly fierce at this time, and, I must own, would rather have quarrelled with somebody than not.) "No, there is nothin' that I know. Ever so many years ago, you see, I used to go with Tom Papillion, Turkington, and two or three fellows, to that theatre. Dolphin had it. And we used to go behind the scenes—and—and I own I had a row with her. And I was in the wrong. There now, I own I was. And she left the theatre. And she behaved quite right. And I was very sorry. And I believe she is as good a woman as ever stept now. And the father was a disreputable old man, but most honourable—I know he was. And there was a fellow in the Bombay service—a fellow by the name of Walker or Walkingham—yes, Walkingham; and I used to meet him at the 'Cave of Harmony,' you know; and he told me that she was as right as right could be. And

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he was doosidly cut up about leaving her. And he would have married her, I dessay, only for his father the General, who wouldn't stand it. And he was ready to hang himself when he went away. He used to drink awfully, and then he used to swear about her; and we used to chaff him, you know. Low vulgarish sort of man, he was; and a very passionate fellow. And if you're goin' to marry her, you know—of course, I ask your pardon, and that; and upon the honour of a gentleman I know nothin' against her. And I wish you joy and all that sort of thing. I do now, really now!" And so saying, the mean mischievous little monkey sneaked away, and clambered up to his own perch in his own bedroom.

Worthy Mrs. Bonnington, with a couple of her young ones, made her appearance at this juncture. She had a key, which gave her a free pass through the garden door, and brought her children for an afternoon's play and fighting with their little nephew and niece. Decidedly, Bessy did not bring up her young folks well. Was it that their grandmothers spoiled them, and undid the governess's work? Were those young people odious (as they often were) by nature, or rendered so by the neglect of their guardians? If Bessy had loved her charges more, would they not have been better? Had she a kind, loving, maternal heart? Ha! This thought,—this jealous doubt,—smote my bosom: and were she mine, and the mother of many possible little Batchelors, would she be kind to *them*? Would they be wilful, and selfish, and abominable little wretches, in a word, like these children? Nay—nay! Say that Elizabeth has but a cold heart; we cannot be all perfection. But, *per contra*, you must admit that, cold as she is, she does her duty. How good she has been to her own brothers and sisters: how cheerfully she has given away her savings to them: how admirably she has behaved to her mother, hiding the iniquities of that disreputable old schemer, and covering her improprieties with decent filial screens and pretexts. Her mother? *Ah! grands dieux!* You want to marry, Charles Batchelor, and you will have that greedy pauper for a mother-in-law; that fluffy Bluecoat boy, those hobnailed taw-players, top-spinners, toffee-eaters, those underbred girls, for your brothers and sisters-in-law! They will be

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quartered upon you. You are so absurdly weak and good-natured—you know you are—that you will never be able to resist. Those boys will grow up; they will go out as clerks or shop-boys; get into debt and expect you to pay their bills: want to be articled to attorneys and so forth, and call upon you for the premium. Their mother will never be out of your house. She will ferret about in your drawers and wardrobes, filch your haberdashery, and cast greedy eyes on the very shirts and coats on your back, and calculate when she can get them for her boys. Those vulgar young miscreants will never fail to come and dine with you on a Sunday. They will bring their young linendraper or articled friends. They will draw bills on you, or give their own to money-lenders, and unless you take up those bills they will consider you a callous avaricious brute, and the heartless author of their ruin. The girls will come and practise on your wife's piano. *They* won't come to you on Sundays only; they will always be staying in the house. They will always be preventing a *tête-à-tête* between your wife and you. As they grow old, they will want her to take them out to tea-parties, and to give such entertainments, where they will introduce their odious young men. They will expect you to commit meannesses, in order to get theatre tickets for them from the newspaper editors of your acquaintance. You will have to sit in the back seat; to pay the cab to and from the play: to see glances and bows of recognition passing between them and dubious bucks in the lobbies: and to lend the girls your wife's gloves, scarfs, ornaments, smelling-bottles, and handkerchiefs, which of course they will never return. If Elizabeth is ailing from any circumstance, they will get a footing in your house, and she will be jealous of them. The ladies of your own family will quarrel with them of course; and very likely your mother-in-law will tell them a piece of her mind. And you bring this dreary certainty upon you, because, forsooth, you fall in love with a fine figure, a pair of grey eyes, and a head of auburn (not to say red) hair! O Charles Batchelor! in what a galley hast thou seated thyself, and what a family is crowded in thy boat!

All these thoughts are passing in my mind, as good Mrs. Bonnington is prattling to me—I protest I don't know about

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what. I think I caught some faint sentences about the Patagonian mission, the National schools, and Mr. Bonnington's lumbago; but I can't say for certain. I was busy with my own thoughts. I had asked the awful question—I was not answered. Bessy had even gone away in a huff about my want of gallantry, but I was easy on that score. As for Mr. Drencher, she had told me her sentiments regarding him; "and though I am considerably older, yet," thought I, "I need not be afraid of *that* rival. But when she says *yes*? Oh dear! oh dear! *Yes* means Elizabeth—certainly, a brave young woman—but it means Mrs. Prior, and Gus, and Amelia Jane, and the whole of that dismal family." No wonder, with these dark thoughts crowding my mind, Mrs. Bonnington found me absent; and, as a comment upon some absurd reply of mine, said, "La! Mr. Batchelor, you must be crossed in love!" Crossed in love! It might be as well for some folks if they *were* crossed in love! At my age, and having loved madly, as I did, that party in Dublin, a man doesn't take the second fit by any means so strongly. Well! well! the die was cast, and I was there to bide the hazard. What can be the matter? I look pale and unwell, and had better see Mr. D. Thank you, my dear Mrs. Bonnington. I had a violent—a violent toothache last night—yes, toothache; and was kept awake, thank you. And there's nothing like having it out? and Mr. D. draws them beautifully, and has taken out six of your children's? It's better now; I dare say it will be better still, soon. I retire to my chamber: I take a book—can't read one word of it. I resume my tragedy. Tragedy? Bosh!

I suppose Mr. Drencher thought his yesterday's patient would be better for a little more advice and medicine, for he must pay a second visit to Shrublands on this day, just after the row with the Captain had taken place, and walked up to the upper regions, as his custom was. Very likely he found Mr. Clarence bathing his nose there, and prescribed for the injured organ. Certainly he knocked at the door of Miss Prior's schoolroom (the fellow was always finding a pretext for entering *that* apartment), and Master Bedford comes to me with a woebegone livid countenance, and a "Ha! ha! young Sawbones is up with her!"

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"So, my poor Dick," I say, "I heard your confession as I was myself running in to rescue Miss P. from that villain."

"My blood was hup," groans Dick,—"up, I beg your pardon. When I saw that young rascal lay a hand on her, I could not help flying at him. I would have hit him if he had been my own father. And I could not help saying what was on my mind. It would come out; I knew it would some day. I might as well wish for the moon as hope to get her. She thinks herself superior to me, and perhaps she is mistaken. But it's no use; she don't care for me; she don't care for anybody. Now the words are out, in course I mustn't stay here."

"You may get another place easily enough with your character, Bedford!"

But he shook his head. "I'm not disposed to black nobody else's boots no more. I have another place. I have saved a bit of money. My poor old mother is gone, whom you used to be so kind to, Mr. B. I'm alone now. Confound that Sawbones, will he *never* come away? I'll tell you about my plans some day, sir, and I know you'll be so good as to help me." And away goes Dick, looking the picture of woe and despair.

Presently, from the upper rooms, Sawbones descends. I happened to be standing in the hall, you see, talking to Dick. Mr. Drencher scowls at me fiercely, and I suppose I return him haughty glance for glance. He hated me: I him: I liked him to hate me.

"How is your patient, Mr.—a—Drencher?" I ask.

"Trifling contusion of the nose—brown paper and vinegar," says the Doctor.

"Great powers! did the villain strike her on the nose?" I cry in terror.

"*Her*—whom?" says he.

"Oh—ah—yes—indeed; it's nothing," I say, smiling. The fact is I had forgotten about Baker in my natural anxiety for Elizabeth.

"I don't know what you mean by laughing, sir," says the red-haired practitioner. "But if you mean chaff, Mr. Batchelor, let me tell you I don't want chaff, and I won't

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have chaff!" and herewith exit Sawbones, looking black doses at me.

Jealous of me, think I, as I sink down in a chair in the morning-room, where the combat had just taken place. And so thou, too, art fever-caught, my poor physician! What a fascination this girl has! Here's the butler: here's the medical man: here am I: here is the Captain has been smitten—smitten on the nose. Has the gardener been smitten too, and is the page gnawing his buttons off for jealousy, and is Monsieur Bulkeley equally in love with her? I take up a review, and think over this, as I glance through its pages.

As I am lounging and reading, Monsieur Bulkeley himself makes his appearance, bearing in cloaks and packages belonging to his lady. "Have the goodness to take that cap off," I say, coolly.

"*You* 'ave the goodness to remember that if hever I see you hout o' this 'ouse I'll punch your hugly 'ead off," says the monstrous menial. But I poise my paper-cutter, and he retires growling.

From despondency I pass to hope; and the prospect of marriage, which before appeared so dark to me, assumes a gayer hue. I have four hundred a year, and that house in Devonshire Street, Bloomsbury Square, of which the upper part will be quite big enough for us. If we have children, there is Queen Square for them to walk and play in. Several genteel families I know, who still live in the neighbourhood, will come and see my wife, and we shall have a comfortable cosy little society, suited to our small means. The tradesmen in Lamb's Conduit Street are excellent, and the music at the Foundling always charming. I shall give up one of my Clubs. The other is within an easy walk.

No: my wife's relations will *not* plague me. Bessy is a most sensible determined woman, and as cool a hand as I know. She will only see Mrs. Prior at proper (and, I trust, distant) intervals. Her brothers and sisters will learn to know their places, and not obtrude upon me or the company which I keep. My friends, who are educated people and gentlemen, will not object to visit me because I live over a shop (my ground-floor and spacious back premises in Devon-

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shire Street are let to a German toy-warehouse). I shall add a hundred or two at least to my income by my literary labour; and Bessy, who has practised frugality all her life, and been a good daughter and a good sister, I know will prove a good wife, and, please Heaven! a good mother. Why, four hundred a year *plus* two hundred, is a nice little income. And my old College friend, Wigmore, who is just on the Bench? He will, he must get me a place—say three hundred a year. With nine hundred a year we can do quite well.

Love is full of elations and despondencies. The future, over which such a black cloud of doubt lowered a few minutes since, blushed a sweet rose-colour now. I saw myself happy, beloved, with a competence, and imagined myself reposing in the delightful garden of Red Lion Square on some summer evening, and half-a-dozen little Batchelors frisking over the flower-bespangled grass there.

After our little colloquy, Mrs. Bonnington not finding much pleasure in my sulky society, had gone to Miss Prior's room with her young folks, and as the door of the morning-room opened now and again, I could hear the dear young ones scuttling about the passages, where they were playing at horses and fighting and so forth. After a while good Mrs. B. came down from the schoolroom. "Whatever has happened, Mr. Batchelor?" she said to me, in her passage through the morning-room. "Miss Prior is very pale and absent. *You* are very pale and absent. Have you been courting her, you naughty man, and trying to supplant Mr. Drencher? There now, you turn as red as my ribbon! Ah! Bessy is a good girl, and *so* fond of my dear children. 'Ah, dear Mrs. Bonnington,' she says to me—but of course you won't tell Lady B.: it would make Lady B. perfectly furious. 'Ah!' says Miss P. to me, 'I wish, ma'am, that my little charges were like their dear little uncles and aunts—so exquisitely brought up!' Pop again wished to beat his uncle. I wish—I wish Frederick would send that child to school! Miss P. owns that he is too much for her. Come, children, it is time to go to dinner." And, with more of this prattle, the good lady summons her young ones, who descend from the schoolroom with their nephew and niece.

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Following nephew and niece, comes demure Miss Prior, to whom I fling a knowing glance, which says, plain as eyes can speak—Do, Elizabeth, come and talk for a little to your faithful Batchelor! She gives a sidelong look of intelligence, leaves a parasol and a pair of gloves on a table, accompanies Mrs. Bonnington and the young ones into the garden, sees the clergyman's wife and children disappear through the garden gate, and her own youthful charges engaged in the strawberry-beds; and, of course, returns to the morning-room for her parasol and gloves, which she had forgotten. There is a calmness about that woman—an easy dauntless dexterity, which frightens me—*ma parole d'honneur*. In that white breast is there a white marble stone in place of the ordinary cordial apparatus? Under the white velvet glove of that cool hand are there bones of cold steel?

"So, Drencher has again been here, Elizabeth?" I say.

She shrugs her shoulders. "To see that wretched Captain Baker. The horrid little man will die! He was not actually sober just now when he—when I—when you saw him. How I wish you had come sooner—to prevent that horrible, tipsy, disreputable quarrel! It makes me very very thoughtful, Mr. Batchelor. He will speak to his mother—to Mr. Lovel. I shall have to go away. I know I must."

"And don't you know where you can find a home, Elizabeth? Have the words I spoke this morning been so soon forgotten?"

"Oh! Mr. Batchelor! you spoke in a heat. You could not think seriously of a poor girl like me, so friendless and poor, with so many family ties. Pop is looking this way, please. To a man bred like you, what can I be?"

"You may make the rest of my life happy, Elizabeth!" I cry. "We are friends of such old—old date, that you know what my disposition is."

"Oh! indeed," says she, "it is certain that there never was a sweeter disposition or a more gentle creature." (Somehow I thought she said the words "gentle creature" with rather a sarcastic tone of voice.) "But consider your habits, dear sir. I remember how in Beak Street you used to be always giving, and, in spite of your income, always poor.

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You love ease and elegance; and having, I dare say, not too much for yourself now, would you encumber yourself with—with me and the expenses of a household? I shall always regard you, esteem you, love you as the best friend I ever had, and—*voici venir la mère du vaurien.*"

Enter Lady Baker. "Do I interrupt a *tête-à-tête*, pray?" she asks.

"My benefactor has known me since I was a child, and befriended me since then," says Elizabeth, with simple kindness beaming in her look. "We were just speaking—I was just—ah!—telling him that my uncle has invited me most kindly to Saint Boniface, whenever I can be spared; and if you and the family go to the Isle of Wight this autumn, perhaps you will intercede with Mr. Lovel, and let me have a little holiday. Mary will take every charge of the children, and I do so long to see my dear aunt and cousins! And I was begging Mr. Batchelor to use his interest with you, and to entreat you to use *your* interest to get me leave. That was what our talk was about."

The deuce it was! I couldn't say No, of course; but I protest I had no idea until that moment that our conversation had been about Aunt and Uncle at Saint Boniface. Again came the horrible suspicion, the dreadful doubt—the chill as of a cold serpent crawling down my back—which had made me pause, and gasp, and turn pale, anon when Bessy and Captain Clarence were holding colloquy together. What *has* happened in this woman's life? *Do* I know all about her, or anything; or only just as much as she chooses? Oh, Batch—Batch! I suspect you are no better than an old gaby!

"And Mr. Drencher has just been here and seen your son," Bessie continues softly; "and he begs and entreats your Ladyship to order Captain Baker to be more prudent. Mr. D. says Captain Baker is shortening his life, indeed he is, by his carelessness."

There is Mr. Lovel coming from the City, and the children are running to their papa! And Miss Prior makes her patroness a meek curtsey, and demurely slides away from the room. With a sick heart I say to myself, "She has been—yes—humbugging is the word—humbugging Lady B.

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Elizabeth! Elizabeth! can it be possible thou art humbugging *me* too?"

Before Lovel enters, Bedford rapidly flits through the room. He looks as pale as a ghost. His face is awfully gloomy.

"Here's the governor come," Dick whispers to me. "It must all come hout now—out, I beg your pardon. So she's caught *you*, has she? I thought she would." And he grins a ghastly grin.

"What do you mean?" I ask, and I dare say turn rather red.

"I know all about it. I'll speak to you to-night, sir. Confound her! confound her!" and he doubles his knuckles into his eyes, and rushes out of the room over Buttons entering with the afternoon tea.

"What on earth's the matter, and why are you knocking the things about?" Lovel asks at dinner of his butler, who, indeed, acted as one distraught. A savage gloom was depicted on Bedford's usually melancholy countenance, and the blunders in his service were many. With his brother-in-law Lovel did not exchange many words. Clarence was not yet forgiven for his escapade two days previous. And when Lady Baker cried, "Mercy, child! what have you done to yourself?" and the Captain replied, "Knocked my face against a dark door—made my nose bleed," Lovel did not look up or express a word of sympathy. "If the fellow knocked his worthless head off, I should not be sorry," the widower murmured to me. Indeed, the tone of the Captain's voice, his *ton*, and his manners in general, were especially odious to Mr. Lovel, who could put up with the tyranny of women, but revolted against the vulgarity and assumption of certain men.

As yet nothing had been said about the morning's quarrel. Here we were all sitting with a sword hanging over our heads, smiling and chatting, and talking cookery, politics, the weather, and what not. Bessy was perfectly cool and dignified at tea. Danger or doubt did not seem to affect *her*. If she had been ordered for execution at the end of the evening she would have made the tea, played her Beethoven, answered questions in her usual voice, and glided about from one to another with

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her usual dignified calm, until the hour of decapitation came, when she would have made her curtsey, and gone out and had the amputation performed quite quietly and neatly. I admired her, I was frightened before her. The cold snake crept more than ever down my back as I meditated on her. I made such awful blunders at whist that even good Mrs. Bonnington lost her temper with her fourteen shillings. Miss Prior would have played her hand out, and never made a fault, you may be sure. She retired at her accustomed hour. Mrs. Bonnington had her glass of negus, and withdrew too. Lovel keeping his eyes sternly on the Captain, that officer could only get a little sherry and seltzer, and went to bed sober. Lady Baker folded Lovel in her arms, a process to which my poor friend very humbly submitted. Everybody went to bed, and no tales were told of the morning's doings. There was a respite, and no execution could take place till to-morrow at any rate. Put on thy nightcap, Damocles, and slumber for to-night at least. Thy slumbers will not be cut short by the awful Chopper of Fate.

Perhaps you may ask what need had *I* to be alarmed? Nothing could happen to me. I was not going to lose a governess's place. Well, if I must tell the truth, I had not acted with entire candour in the matter of Bessy's appointment. In recommending her to Lovel and the late Mrs. L., I had answered for her probity, and so forth, with all my might. I had described the respectability of her family, her father's campaigns, her grandfather's (old Doctor Sargent's) celebrated sermons; and had enlarged with the utmost eloquence upon the learning and high character of her uncle, the Master of Boniface, and the deserved regard he bore his niece. But that part of Bessy's biography which related to the Academy I own I had not touched upon. *A quoi bon?* Would every gentleman or lady like to have everything told about him or her? I had kept the Academy dark then; and so had brave Dick Bedford the butler; and should that miscreant Captain reveal the secret, I knew there would be an awful commotion in the building. I should have to incur Lovel's not unjust reproaches for *suppressio veri*, and the anger of those two *viragines*, the grandmothers of Lovel's children.

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I was more afraid of the women than of him, though conscience whispered me that I had not acted quite rightly by my friend.

When, then, the bed-candles were lighted, and everyone said good-night, "Oh! Captain Baker," say I, gaily, and putting on a confoundedly hypocritical grin, "if you will come into my room, I will give you that book."

"What book?" says Baker.

"The book we were talking of this morning."

"Hang me, if I know what you mean," says he. And luckily for me, Lovel, giving a shrug of disgust, and a good-night to me, stalked out of the room, bed-candle in hand. No doubt, he thought his wretch of a brother-in-law did not well remember after dinner what he had done or said in the morning.

As I now had the Blacksheep to myself, I said calmly, "You are quite right. There was no talk about a book at all, Captain Baker. But I wished to see you alone, and impress upon you my earnest wish that everything which occurred this morning — mind, *everything* — should be considered as strictly private, and should be confided to *no person whatever* —you understand? —to no person."

"Confound me," Baker breaks out, "if I understand what you mean by your books and your 'strictly private.' I shall speak what I choose—hang me!"

"In that case. sir," I said, "will you have the goodness to send a friend of yours to my friend Captain Fitzboodle? I must consider the matter as personal between ourselves. You insulted—and, as I find now, for the second time—a lady whose relations to me you know. You have given neither to her, nor to me, the apology to which we are both entitled. You refuse even to promise to be silent regarding a painful scene which was occasioned by your own brutal and cowardly behaviour; and you must abide by the consequences, sir! you must abide by the consequences!" And I glared at him over my flat candlestick.

"Curse me!—and hang me!—and," &c. &c. &c. he says, "if I know what all this is about. What the dooce do you talk to *me* about books, and about silence, and apologies, and

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sending Captain Fitzboodle to me? *I* don't want to see Captain Fitzboodle—great fat brute! *I* know him perfectly well."

"Hush!" say I, "here's Bedford." In fact, Dick appeared at this juncture, to close the house and put the lamps out.

But Captain Clarence only spoke or screamed louder. "What do I care about who hears me? That fellow insulted me already to-day, and I'd have pitched his life out of him, only I was down, and I'm so confounded weak and nervous, and just out of my fever—and—and hang it all! what are you driving at, Mr. What's-your-name?" And the wretched little creature cries almost as he speaks.

"Once for all, will you agree that the affair about which we spoke shall go no further?" I say, as stern as Draco.

"I shan't say anythin' about it. I wish you'd leave me alone, you fellows, and not come botherin'. I wish I could get a glass of brandy-and-water up in my bedroom. I tell you I can't sleep without it," whimpers the wretch.

"Sorry I laid hands on you, sir," says Bedford, sadly. "It wasn't worth the while. Go to bed, and I'll get you something warm."

"Will you, though? I couldn't sleep without it. Do now—do now! and I won't say anythin'—I won't now—on the honour of a gentleman, I won't. Good-night, Mr. What-d'ye-call." And Bedford leads the helot to his chamber.

"I've got him in bed; and I've given him a dose; and I put some laudanum in it. He ain't been out. He has not had much to-day," says Bedford, coming back to my room, with his face ominously pale.

"You have given him laudanum?" I ask.

"*Sawbones* gave him some yesterday,—told me to give him a little—forty drops," growls Bedford.

Then the gloomy major-domo puts a hand into each waistcoat pocket, and looks at me. "You want to fight for her, do you, sir? Calling out, and that sort of game? Phoo!"—and he laughs scornfully.

"The little miscreant is too despicable, I own," say I, "and it's absurd for a peaceable fellow like me to talk about powder and shot at this time of day. But what could I do?"

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"I say it's SHE ain't worth it," says Bedford, lifting up both clenched fists out of the waistcoat pockets.

"What do you mean, Dick?" I ask.

"She's humbugging you—she's humbugging me,—she's humbugging everybody," roars Dick. "Look here, sir!" and out of one of the clenched fists he flings a paper down on the table.

"What is it?" I ask. It's her handwriting. I see the neat trim lines on the paper.

"It's not to you; nor yet to me," says Bedford.

"Then how dare you read it, sir?" I ask, all of a tremble.

"It's to him. It's to Sawbones," hisses out Bedford. "Sawbones dropt it as he was getting into his gig; and I read it. *I* ain't going to make no bones about whether it's wrote to me or not. She tells him how you asked her to marry you." ("Ha!") "That's how I came to know it. And do you know what she calls you, and what *he* calls you, —that castor-hoil beast? And do you know what she says of you? That you hadn't pluck to stand by her to-day. There, —it's all down under her hand and seal. You may read it, or not, if you like. And if poppy or mandragora will medicine you to sleep afterwards, I just recommend you to take it. *I* shall go and get a drop out of the Captain's bottle—I shall."

And he leaves me, and the fatal paper on the table.

Now, suppose you had been in my case—would you, or would you not, have read the paper? Suppose there is some news—bad news—about the woman you love, will you, or will you not, hear it? Was Othello a rogue because he let Iago speak to him? There was the paper. It lay there glimmering under the light, with all the house quiet.

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CHAPTER VI.

CECILIA'S SUCCESSOR.

ONSIEUR ET HONORÉ LECTEUR! I see, as perfectly as if you were sitting opposite to me, the scorn depicted on your noble countenance when you read my confession that I, Charles Batchelor, Esquire, did burglariously enter the premises of Edward Drencher, Esquire, M. R. C. S. I. (phew! the odious pestle-grinder, I never could bear him!), and break open, and read a certain letter his property. I may have been wrong, but I am candid. I tell my misdeeds; some fellows hold their tongues. Besides, my good man, consider the temptation, and the horrid insight into the paper which Bedford's report had already given me. Would *you* like to be told that the girl of your heart was playing fast and loose with it, had none of her own, or had given hers to another? I don't want to make a Mrs. Robin Gray of any woman, and merely because "her mither presses her sair" to

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marry against her will. "If Miss Prior," thought I, "prefers this lint-scraper to me, ought I to baulk her? He is younger, and stronger, certainly, than myself. Some people may consider him handsome. (By the way, what a remarkable thing it is about many women, that, in affairs of the heart, they don't seem to care or understand whether a man is a gentleman or not.) It may be it is my superior fortune and social station which may induce Elizabeth to waver in her choice between me and my bleeding, bolusing, tooth-drawing rival. If so, and I am only taken from mercenary considerations, what a pretty chance of subsequent happiness does either of us stand! Take the vaccinator, girl, if thou preferrest him! I know what it is to be crossed in love already. It's hard, but I can bear it! I ought to know, I must know, I *will* know what is in that paper!" So saying, as I pace round and round the table where the letter lies flickering white under the midnight taper, I stretch out my hand—I seize the paper—I—— well, I own it—there—yes—I took it and I read it.

Or, rather, I may say, I read that part of IT which the bleeder and blisterer had flung down. It was but a fragment of a letter—a fragment—oh! how bitter to swallow! A lump of Epsom salt could not have been more disgusting. It appeared (from Bedford's statement) that Æsculapius, on getting into his gig, had allowed this scrap of paper to whisk out of his pocket—the rest he read, no doubt, under the eyes of the writer. Very likely, during the perusal, he had taken and squeezed the false hand which wrote the lines. Very likely the first part of the *precious document* contained compliments to him—from the horrible context I judged so—compliments to that vendor of leeches and bandages, into whose heart I dare say I wished ten thousand lancets might be stuck, as I perused the FALSE ONE'S wheedling address to him! So ran the document. How well every word of it was engraved on my anguished heart! If page *three*, which I suppose was about the bit of the letter which I got, was as it was—what must pages *one* and *two* have been? The dreadful document began, then, thus:—

"—— dear hair in the locket, which I shall *ever* wear for the sake of *him who gave it*"—(dear hair! indeed—disgusting carrots!

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She should have been ashamed to call it "dear hair")—"for the sake of him who gave it and whose *bad temper* I shall pardon, because I think in spite of his faults he is a *little fond* of his poor Lizzie! Ah, Edward! how *could* you go on so the last time about poor Mr. B.! Can you imagine that I can ever have more than a filial regard for the kind old gentleman!" (*Il était question de moi, ma parole d'honneur.* I was the kind old gentleman!) "I have known him since my childhood. He was intimate in our family in earlier and happier days; made our house his home; and, I must say, was most kind to all of us children. If he has vanities, you naughty boy, is he the only one of his sex who is vain? Can you fancy that such an old creature (an *old muff*, as you call him, you wicked satirical man) could ever make an impression on my heart? No, sir!" (Aha! So I was an old muff, was I?) "Though I don't wish to make *you* vain too, or that other people should laugh at you, as you do at poor dear Mr. B., I think, sir, you need but look *in your glass* to see that you need not be afraid of such a rival as *that*. You fancy he is attentive to me? If you looked only a little angrily at him, he would fly back to London. To-day, when your *horrid little patient* did presume to offer to take my hand, when I boxed his little wicked ears and sent him *spinning* to the end of the room—poor Mr. Batch was so *frightened* that he did not *dare* to come into the room, and I saw him peeping behind a statue on the lawn, and he would not come in until the *servants arrived*. Poor man! We cannot all of us have courage like *a certain Edward*, who I know is as *bold as a lion*. Now, sir, you must not be quarrelling with that wretched little Captain for being rude. I have shown him that I can very well *take care of myself*. I knew the *odious thing* the first moment I set eyes on him, though he had forgotten me. Years ago I met him, and I remember he was equally *rude and tips*——"

Here the letter was torn. Beyond "*tips*" it did not go. But that was enough, wasn't it? To this woman I had offered a gentle and manly, I may say a kind and tender heart—I had offered four hundred a year in funded property, besides my house in Devonshire Street, Bloomsbury—and she preferred *Edward*, forsooth, at the sign of the Gallipot: and may ten thousand pestles smash his brains!

You may fancy what a night I had after reading that scrap. I promise you I did not sleep much. I heard the hours toll as I kept vigil. I lay amidst shattered capitals, broken

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shafts of the tumbled palace which I had built in imagination —oh! how bright and stately! I sat amongst the ruins of my own happiness, surrounded by the murdered corpses of innocent-visioned domestic joys. Tick—tock! Moment after moment I heard on the clock the clinking footsteps of wakeful grief. I fell into a doze towards morning, and dreamed that I was dancing with Glorvina, when I woke with a start, finding Bedford arrived with my shaving-water and opening the shutters. When he saw my haggard face he wagged his head.

"You *have* read it, I see, sir," says he.

"Yes, Dick," groaned I out of bed, "I have swallowed it." And I laughed I may say a fiendish laugh. "And now I have taken it, not poppy nor mandragora, nor all the drowsy syrups in his shop (hang him!) will be able to medicine me to sleep for some time to come!"

"She has no heart, sir. I don't think she cares for t'other chap much," groans the gloomy butler. "She can't, after having known *us*"—and my companion in grief, laying down my hot-water jug, retreats.

I did not cut any part of myself with my razor. I shaved quite calmly. I went to the family at breakfast. My impression is I was sarcastic and witty. I smiled most kindly at Miss Prior when she came in. Nobody could have seen from my outward behaviour that anything was wrong within. I was an apple. Could you inspect the worm at my core? No, no. Somebody, I think old Baker, complimented me on my good looks. I was a smiling lake. Could you see on my placid surface, amongst my sheeny water-lilies, that a corpse was lying under my cool depths? "A bit of devilled chicken?" "No, thank you. By the way, Lovel, I think I must go to town to-day." "You'll come back to dinner, of course?" "Well—no." "Oh, stuff! You promised me to-day and to-morrow. Robinson, Brown, and Jones are coming to-morrow, and you must be here to meet them." Thus we prattle on. I answer, I smile, I say, "Yes, if you please, another cup," or, "Be so good as to hand the muffin," or what not. But I am dead. I feel as if I am under ground, and buried. Life, and tea, and clatter, and muffins are going on, of course; and

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daisies spring and the sun shines on the grass whilst I am under it. Ah, dear me! it's very cruel: it's very very lonely: it's very odd! I don't belong to the world any more. I have done with it. I am shelved away. But my spirit returns and flitters through the world, which it has no longer anything to do with: and my ghost, as it were, comes and smiles at my own tombstone. Here lies Charles Batchelor, the Unloved One. Oh! alone, alone, alone! Why, Fate! didst thou ordain that I should be companionless? Tell me where the Wandering Jew is, that I may go and sit with him. Is there any place at a lighthouse vacant? Who knows where is the Island of Juan Fernandez? Engage me a ship and take me there at once. Mr. R. Crusoe, I think? My dear Robinson, have the kindness to hand me over your goatskin cap, breeches, and umbrella. Go home, and leave *me* here. Would you know who is the solitariest man on earth? That man am I. Was that cutlet which I ate at breakfast anon, was that lamb which frisked on the mead last week (beyond yon wall where the unconscious cucumber lay basking which was to form his sauce)—I say was that lamb made so tender that I might eat him? And my heart, then? Poor heart! wert thou so softly constituted only that women might stab thee? So I am a Muff, am I? And she will always wear a lock of his "dear hair," will she? Ha! ha! The men on the omnibus looked askance as they saw me laugh. They thought it was from Hanwell, not Putney, I was escaping. Escape? Who can escape? I went into London. I went to the Clubs. Jawkins, of course, was there; and my impression is that he talked as usual. I took another omnibus, and went back to Putney. "I will go back and revisit my grave," I thought. It is said that ghosts loiter about their former haunts a good deal when they are first dead; flit wistfully among their old friends and companions, and, I dare say, expect to hear a plenty of conversation and friendly tearful remark about themselves. But suppose they return, and find nobody talking of them at all? Or suppose, Hamlet (Père, and Royal Dane) comes back and finds Claudius and Gertrude very comfortable over a piece of cold meat, or what not? Is the late gentleman's present position as a ghost a

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very pleasant one? Crow, Cocks! Quick, Sundawn! Open, Trap-door! *Allons*: it's best to pop underground again. So I am a Muff, am I? What a curious thing that walk up the hill to the house was! What a different place Shrublands was yesterday to what it is to-day! Has the sun lost its light, and the flowers their bloom, and the joke its sparkle, and the dish its savour? Why, bless my soul! what is Lizzy herself—only an ordinary woman—freckled certainly—incorrigibly dull, and without a scintillation of humour; and you mean to say, Charles Batchelor, that your heart once beat about *that* woman? Under the intercepted letter of that cold assassin, my heart had fallen down dead, irretrievably dead. I remember, *à propos* of the occasion of my first death, that perpetrated by Glorvina—on my second visit to Dublin—with what a strange sensation I walked under some trees in the Phœnix Park beneath which it had been my custom to meet my False One Number 1. There were the trees—there were the birds singing—there was the bench on which we used to sit—the same, but how different! The trees had a different foliage, exquisite amaranthine; the birds sang a song paradisiacal; the bench was a bank of roses and fresh flowers, which young Love twined in fragrant chaplets around the statue of Glorvina. Roses and fresh flowers? Rheumatisms and flannel-waistcoats, you silly old man! Foliage and Song? O namby-pamby driveller! A statue?—a doll, thou twaddling old dullard!—a doll with carmine cheeks, and a heart stuffed with bran—I say, on the night preceding that ride to and from Putney, I had undergone death—in that omnibus I had been carried over to t'other side of the Stygian shore. I returned but as a passionless ghost, remembering my life-days, but not feeling any more. Love was dead, Elizabeth! Why, the Doctor came, and partook freely of lunch, and I was not angry. Yesterday I called him names, and hated him, and was jealous of him. To-day I felt no rivalship; and no envy at his success; and no desire to supplant him. No—I swear—not the slightest wish to make Elizabeth mine if she would. I might have cared for her yesterday—yesterday I had a heart. Psha! my good sir or madam. You sit by me at dinner. Perhaps you are handsome, and use your

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eyes. Ogle away. Don't baulk yourself, pray. But if you fancy I care a threepenny-piece about you—or for your eyes —or for your bonny brown hair—or for your sentimental remarks, sidelong warbled—or for your praise to (not of) my face—or for your satire behind my back—ah me!—how mistaken you are! *Peine perdue, ma chère dame!* The digestive organs are still in good working order—but the heart! *Caret.*

I was perfectly civil to Mr. Drencher, and, indeed, wonder to think how in my irritation I had allowed myself to apply (mentally) any sort of disagreeable phrases to a most excellent and deserving and good-looking young man, who is beloved by the poor, and has won the just confidence of an extensive circle of patients. I made no sort of remark to Miss Prior, except about the weather and the flowers in the garden. I was bland, easy, rather pleasant, not too high-spirited, you understand. —No: I vow you could not have seen a nerve wince, or the slightest alteration in my demeanour. I helped the two old dowagers; I listened to their twaddle; I gaily wiped up with my napkin three-quarters of a glass of sherry which Popham flung over my trousers. I would defy you to know that I had gone through the ticklish operation of an excision of the heart a few hours previously. Heart—pooh! I saw Miss Prior's lip quiver. Without a word between us, she knew perfectly well that all was over as regarded her late humble servant. *She* winced once or twice. While Drencher was busy with his plate, the grey eyes cast towards me interjectional looks of puzzled entreaty. *She*, I say, winced; and I give you my word I did not care a fig whether she was sorry, or pleased, or happy, or going to be hanged. And I can't give a better proof of my utter indifference about the matter, than the fact that I wrote two or three copies of verses descriptive of my despair. They appeared, you may perhaps remember, in one of the annuals of those days, and were generally attributed to one of the most sentimental of our young poets. I remember the reviews said they were "replete with emotion," "full of passionate and earnest feeling," and so forth. Feeling, indeed!—ha! ha! "Passionate outbursts of a grief-stricken heart!"—Passionate scrapings of a fiddlestick, my good friend.

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"Lonely" of course rhymes with "only," and "gushes" with "blushes," and "despair" with "hair," and so on. Despair is perfectly compatible with a good dinner, I promise you. Hair is false: hearts are false. Grapes may be sour, but claret is good, my masters. Do you suppose I am going to cry my eyes out, because Chloe's are turned upon Strephon? If you find any whimpering in mine, may they never wink at a bee's-wing again.

When the Doctor rose presently, saying he would go and see the gardener's child, who was ill, and casting longing looks at Miss Prior, I assure you I did not feel a tittle of jealousy, though Miss Bessy actually followed Mr. Drencher on to the lawn, under the pretext of calling back Miss Cissy, who had run thither without her bonnet.

"Now, Lady Baker, which was right? you or I?" asks bonny Mrs. Bonnington, wagging her head towards the lawn where this couple of innocents were disporting.

"You thought there was an affair between Miss Prior and the medical gentleman," I say, smiling. "It was no secret, Mrs. Bonnington."

"Yes, but there were others who were a little smitten in that quarter too," says Lady Baker; and she in turn wags *her* old head towards me.

"You mean me?" I answer, as innocent as a new-born babe. "I am a burnt child, Lady Baker; I have been at the fire, and am already thoroughly done, thank you. One of your charming sex jilted me some years ago; and once is quite enough, I am much obliged to you."

This I said, not because it was true; in fact, it was the reverse of truth; but if I choose to lie about my own affairs, pray, why not? And though a strictly truth-telling man generally, when I do lie, I promise you I do it boldly and well.

"If, as I gather from Mrs. Bonnington, Mr. Drencher and Miss Prior like each other, I wish my old friend joy. I wish Mr. Drencher joy with all my heart. The match seems to me excellent. He is a deserving, a clever, and a handsome young fellow; and I am sure, ladies, you can bear witness to *her* goodness, after all you have known of her."

"My dear Batchelor," says Mrs. Bonnington, still smiling

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and winking, "I don't believe one single word you say—not one single word!" And she looks infinitely pleased as she speaks.

"Oh!" cries Lady Baker, "my good Mrs. Bonnington, you are always match-making—don't contradict me. You know you thought——"

"Oh, please don't," cries Mrs. B.

"I will. She thought, Mr. Batchelor, she actually thought that our son, that my Cecilia's husband, was smitten by the governess. I should like to have seen him dare!" and her flashing eyes turn towards the late Mrs. Lovel's portrait, with its faded simper leering over the harp. "The idea that any woman could succeed that angel, indeed!"

"Indeed, I don't envy her," I said.

"You don't mean, Batchelor, that my Frederick would not make any woman happy!" cries the Bonnington. "He's only seven-and-thirty, very young for his age, and the most affectionate of creatures. I am surprised, and it's most cruel, and most unkind of you, to say that you don't envy any woman that marries my boy!"

"My dear good Mrs. Bonnington, you quite misapprehend me," I remark.

"Why, when his late wife was alive," goes on Mrs. B., sobbing, "you know with what admirable sweetness and gentleness he bore her—her—bad temper—excuse me, Lady Baker!"

"Oh, pray, abuse my departed angel!" cries the Baker; "say that your son should marry and forget her—say that those darlings should be made to forget their mother. She was a woman of birth, and a woman of breeding, and a woman of family, and the Bakers came in with the Conqueror, Mrs. Bonnington——"

"I think I heard of one in the Court of Pharaoh," I interposed.

"And to say that a Baker is not worthy of a Lovel is *pretty* news indeed! Do you hear *that*, Clarence?"

"Hear what, ma'am?" says Clarence, who enters at this juncture. "You're speakin' loud enough—though blesht if I hear two sh-shyllables."

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"You wretched boy, you have been smoking!"

"Shmoking—haven't I?" says Clarence with a laugh; "and I've been at the 'Five Bells,' and I've been having a game of billiards with an old friend of mine," and he lurches towards a decanter.

"Ah! don't drink any more, my child!" cries the mother.

"I'm as sober as a judge, I tell you. You leave so precious little in the bottle at dinner, that I must get it when I can, mustn't I, Batchelor, old boy? We had a row yesterday, hadn't we? No, it was sugar-baker. I'm not angry—you're not angry. Bear no malish. Here's your health, old boy!"

The unhappy gentleman drank his bumper of sherry, and, tossing his hair off his head, said—"Where's the governess—where's Bessy Bellenden? Who's that kickin' me under the table, I say?"

"Where is who?" asks his mother.

"Bessy Bellenden—the governess—that's her real name. Known her these ten years. Used to dansh at Prinsh's Theatre. Remember her in the corps-de-ballet. Ushed to go behind the shenes. Dooshid pretty girl!" maunders out the tipsy youth; and as the unconscious subject of his mischievous talk enters the room, again he cries out, "Come and sit by me, Bessy Bellenden, I say!"

The matrons rose with looks of horror in their faces. "A ballet-dancer!" cries Mrs. Bonnington. "A ballet-dancer!" echoes Lady Baker. "Young woman, is this true?"

"The Bulbul and the Roshe—hay?" laughs the Captain. "Don't you remember you and Fosbery in blue and shpangles? Always all right, though, Bellenden was. Fosbery washn't: but Bellenden was. Give you every credit for that, Bellenden. Boxsh my ears. Bear no malish—no—no—malish! Get some more sherry, you—whatsh your name—Bedford, butler—and I'll pay you the money I owe you." And he laughs his wild laugh, utterly unconscious of the effect he is producing. Bedford stands staring at him as pale as death. Poor Miss Prior is as white as marble. Wrath, terror, and wonder are in the countenances of the dowagers. It is an awful scene!

"Mr. Batchelor knows that it was to help my family I did it," says the poor governess.

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"Yes, by George! and nobody can say a word against her," bursts in Dick Bedford, with a sob; "and she is as honest as any woman here."

"Pray, who told you to put your oar in?" cries the tipsy Captain.

"And you knew that this person was on the stage, and you introduced her into my son's family? Oh, Mr. Batchelor, Mr. Batchelor, I didn't think it of you! Don't speak to me, miss!" cries the flurried Bonnington.

"You brought this woman to the children of my adored Cecilia?" calls out the other dowager. "Serpent, leave the room! Pack your trunks, viper! and quit the house this instant. Don't touch her, Cissy. Come to me, my blessing. Go away, you horrid wretch!"

"She ain't a horrid wretch; and when I was ill she was very good to us," breaks in Pop, with a roar of tears: "and you shan't go, Miss Prior—my dear pretty Miss Prior. You shan't go!" and the child rushes up to the governess, and covers her neck with tears and kisses.

"Leave her, Popham, my darling blessing!—leave that woman!" cries Lady Baker.

"I won't, you old beast!—and she sha-a-an't go. And I wish you was dead—and, my dear, you shan't go, and Pa shan't let you!" shouts the boy.

"Oh, Popham, if Miss Prior has been naughty, Miss Prior must go!" says Cecilia, tossing up her head.

"Spoken like my daughter's child!" cries Lady Baker: and little Cissy, having flung her little stone, looks as if she had performed a very virtuous action.

"God bless you, Master Pop—you are a trump, you are!" says Mr. Bedford.

"Yes, that I am, Bedford; and she shan't go, shall she?" cries the boy.

But Bessy stooped down sadly and kissed him. "Yes, I must, dear," she said.

"Don't touch him! Come away, sir! Come away from her this moment!" shrieked the two mothers.

"I nursed him through the scarlet fever, when his own mother would not come near him," says Elizabeth, gently.

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"I'm blest if she didn't," sobs Bedford—"and—bub—bub—bless you, Master Pop!"

"That child is wicked enough, and headstrong enough, and rude enough already!" exclaims Lady Baker. "I desire, young woman, you will not pollute him further!"

"That's a hard word to say to an honest woman, ma'am," says Bedford.

"Pray, miss, are you engaged to the butler, too?" hisses out the dowager.

"There's very little the matter with Barnet's child—only teeth—— What on earth has happened? My dear Lizzie—my dear Miss Prior—what is it?" cries the Doctor, who enters from the garden at this juncture.

"Nothing has happened, only this young woman has appeared in a new *character*," says Lady Baker. "My son has just informed us that Miss Prior danced upon the stage, Mr. Drencher; and if you think such a person is a fit companion for your mother and sisters, who attend a place of Christian worship, I believe—I wish you joy."

"Is this—is this—true?" asks the Doctor, with a look of bewilderment.

"Yes, it is true," sighs the girl.

"And you never told me, Elizabeth?" groans the Doctor.

"She's as honest as any woman here," calls out Bedford. "She gave all the money to her family."

"It wasn't fair not to tell me. It wasn't fair," sobs the Doctor. And he gives her a ghastly parting look, and turns his back.

"I say, you—Hi! What-d'you-call-'im? Sawbones!" shrieks out Captain Clarence. "Come back, I say. She's all right, I say. Upon my honour, now, she's all right."

"Miss P. shouldn't have kept this from me. My mother and sisters are Dissenters, and very strict. I couldn't ask a party into my family who has been—who has been—— I wish you good morning," says the Doctor, and stalks away.

"And now, will you please to get your things ready, and go too?" continues Lady Baker. "My dear Mrs. Bonnington, you think——"

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"Certainly, certainly, she must go!" cries Mrs. Bonnington.

"Don't go till Lovel comes home, miss. *These* ain't your mistresses. Lady Baker don't pay your salary. If you go, I go, too. There!" calls out Bedford, and mumbles something in her ear about "the end of the world."

"You go, too; and a good riddance, you insolent brute!" exclaims the dowager.

"Oh, Captain Clarence! you have made a pretty morning's work," I say.

"I don't know what the dooce all the sherry—all the shinty's about," says the Captain, playing with the empty decanter. "Gal's a very good gal—pretty gal. If she choosesh dansh shport her family, why the doosh shouldn't she dansh shport a family?"

"That is exactly what I recommend this person to do," says Lady Baker, tossing up her head. "And now I will thank you to leave the room. Do you hear?"

As poor Elizabeth obeyed this order, Bedford darted after her; and I know ere she had gone five steps he had offered her his savings and everything he had. She might have had mine yesterday. But she had deceived me. She had played fast and loose with me. She had misled me about this Doctor. I could trust her no more. My love of yesterday was dead, I say. That vase was broken which never could be mended. She knew all was over between us. She did not once look at me as she left the room.

The two dowagers—one of them, I think, a little alarmed at her victory—left the house, and for once went away in the same barouche. The young maniac who had been the cause of the mischief staggered away, I know not whither.

About four o'clock, poor little Pinhorn, the children's maid, came to me, well-nigh choking with tears, as she handed me a letter. "She's goin' away—and she saved both them children's lives, she did. And she've wrote to you, sir. And Bedford's a-goin'. And I'll give warnin', I will, too!" And the weeping handmaiden retires, leaving me, perhaps somewhat frightened, with the letter in my hand.

"Dear Sir," she said—"I may write you a line of thanks and farewell. I shall go to my mother. I shall soon find

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LOVEL'S MOTHERS.

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another place. Poor Bedford, who has a generous heart, told me that he had given you a letter of mine to Mr. D——. I saw this morning that you knew everything. I can only say now that for all your long kindnesses and friendship to my family I am always your sincere and grateful—E. P."

Yes: that was all. I think she *was* grateful. But she had not been candid with me, nor with the poor surgeon. I had no anger: far from it: a great deal of regard and good will, nay admiration, for the intrepid girl who had played a long hard part very cheerfully and bravely. But my foolish little flicker of love had blazed up and gone out in a day; I knew that she never could care for me. In that dismal wakeful night, after reading the letter, I had thought her character and story over, and seen to what a life of artifice and dissimulation necessity had compelled her. I did not blame her. In such circumstances, with such a family, how could she be frank and open? Poor thing! poor thing! Do we know anybody? Ah! dear me, we are most of us very lonely in the world. You who have any who love you, cling to them, and thank God. I went into the hall towards evening: her poor trunks and packages were there, and the little nurserymaid weeping over them. The sight unmanned me; and I believe I cried myself. Poor Elizabeth! And with these small chests you recommence your life's lonely voyage! I gave the girl a couple of sovereigns. She sobbed a God bless me! and burst out crying more desperately than ever. Thou hast a kind heart, little Pinhorn!

"'Miss Prior—to be called for.' Whose trunks are these?" says Lovel, coming from the City. The dowagers drove up at the same moment.

"Didn't you see us from the omnibus, Frederick?" cries her Ladyship, coaxingly. "We followed behind you all the way!"

"We were in the barouche, my dear," remarks Mrs. Bonnington rather nervously.

"Whose trunks are these?—what's the matter?—and what's the girl crying for?" asks Lovel.

"Miss Prior is a-going away," sobs Pinhorn.

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"Miss Prior going? Is this your doing, my Lady Baker?—or yours, Mother?" the master of the house says, sternly.

"She is going, my love, because she cannot stay in this family," says Mamma.

"That woman is no fit companion for my angel's children, Frederick!" cries Lady B.

"That person has deceived us all, my love!" says Mamma.

"Deceived?—how? Deceived whom?" continues Mr. Lovel, more and more hotly.

"Clarence, love! come down, dear! Tell Mr. Lovel everything. Come down and tell him this moment," cries Lady Baker to her son, who at this moment appears on the corridor which was round the hall.

"What's the row now, pray?" And Captain Clarence descends, breaking his shins over poor Elizabeth's trunks, and calling down on them his usual maledictions.

"Tell Mr. Lovel where you saw that—that person, Clarence. Now, sir, listen to my Cecilia's brother!"

"Saw her—saw her in blue and spangles, in the 'Rose and the Bulbul,' at the Prince's Theatre—and a doosid nice-looking girl she was too!" says the Captain.

"There, sir!"

"There, Frederick!" cry the matrons in a breath.

"And what then?" asks Lovel.

"Mercy! you ask, What then, Frederick? Do you know what a theatre is? Tell Frederick what a theatre is, Mr. Batchelor, and that my grandchildren must not be educated by——"

"My grandchildren—my Cecilia's children," shrieks the other, "must not be pol-luted by——"

"Silence!" I say. "Have you a word against her—have you, pray, Baker?"

"No. 'Gad! I never said a word against her," says the Captain. "No, hang me, you know—but——"

"But suppose I knew the fact the whole time?" asks Lovel, with rather a blush on his cheek. "Suppose I knew that she danced to give her family bread? Suppose I knew that she toiled and laboured to support her parents, and

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brothers and sisters? Suppose I know that out of her pittance she has continued to support them? Suppose I know that she watched my own children through fever and danger? For these reasons I must turn her out of doors, must I? No, by Heaven!—No!—Elizabeth!—Miss Prior!—Come down!—Come here, I beg you!"

The governess, arrayed as for departure, at this moment appeared on the corridor running round the hall. As Lovel continued to speak very loud and resolute, she came down looking deadly pale.

Still much excited, the widower went up to her and took her hand. "Dear Miss Prior!" he said—"dear Elizabeth! you have been the best friend of me and mine. You tended my wife in illness, you took care of my children in fever and danger. You have been an admirable sister, daughter in your own family—and for this, and for these benefits conferred upon us, my relatives—my mother-in-law—would drive you out of my doors! It shall not be!—by heavens, it shall not be!"

You should have seen little Bedford sitting on the governess's box, shaking his fist, and crying "Hurrah!" as his master spoke. By this time the loud voices and the altercation in the hall had brought a half-dozen of servants from their quarters into the hall. "Go away, all of you!" shouts Lovel; and the domestic *posse* retires, Bedford being the last to retreat, and nodding approval at his master as he backs out of the room.

"You are very good, and kind, and generous, sir," says the pale Elizabeth, putting a handkerchief to her eyes. "But without the confidence of these ladies, I must not stay, Mr. Lovel. God bless you for your goodness to me. I must, if you please, return to my mother."

The worthy gentleman looked fiercely round at the two elder women, and again seizing the governess's hand said—"Elizabeth! dear Elizabeth! I implore you not to go! If you love the children——"

"Oh, sir!" (A cambric veil covers Miss Prior's emotion, and the expression of her face, on this ejaculation.)

"If you love the children," gasps out the widower, "stay with them. If you have a regard for—for their father"—

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(Timanthes, where is thy pocket-handkerchief?)—remain in this house, with such a title as none can question. Be the mistress of it."

"His mistress—and before me!" screams Lady Baker. "Mrs. Bonnington, this depravity is monstrous!"

"Be my wife, dear Elizabeth!" the widower continues. "Continue to watch over the children, who shall be motherless no more."

"Frederick! Frederick! haven't they got *us*?" shrieks one of the old ladies.

"Oh, my poor dear Lady Baker!" says Mrs. Bonnington.

"Oh, my poor dear Mrs. Bonnington!" says Lady Baker.

"Frederick, listen to your mother," implores Mrs. Bonnington.

"To your mothers," sobs Lady Baker.

And they both go down on their knees, and I heard a boohoo of a guffaw behind the green-baized servants' door, where I have no doubt Monsieur Bedford was posted.

"Ah, Batchelor! dear Batchelor, speak to him!" cries good Mrs. Bonny. "We are praying this child, Batchelor—this child whom you used to know at College, and when he was a good gentle obedient boy. You have influence with my poor Frederick. Exert it for his heartbroken mother's sake; and you shall have my bubble-ubble-essings, you shall."

"My dear good lady," I exclaim—not liking to see the kind soul in grief.

"Send for Doctor Straightwaist! Order him to pause in his madness," cries Baker; "or it is I, Cecilia's mother, the mother of that murdered angel, that shall go mad."

"Angel? *Allons!*" I say. "Since his widowhood, you have never given the poor fellow any peace. You have been for ever quarrelling with him. You took possession of his house; bullied his servants; spoiled his children—you did, Lady Baker."

"Sir," cries her Ladyship, "you are a low, presuming, vulgar man! Clarence, beat this rude man!"

"Nay," I say, "there must be no more quarrelling to-day. And I am sure Captain Baker will not molest me. Miss Prior,

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I am delighted that my old friend should have found a woman of good sense, good conduct, good temper—a woman who has had many trials, and borne them with very great patience—to take charge of him, and make him happy. I congratulate you both. Miss Prior has borne poverty so well that I am certain she will bear good fortune, for it *is* good fortune to become the wife of such a loyal, honest, kindly gentleman as Frederick Lovel."

After such a speech as that, I think I may say, *liberavi animam*. Not one word of complaint, you see, not a hint about "Edward," not a single sarcasm, though I might have launched some terrific shots out of my quiver, and have made Lovel and his bride-elect writhe before me. But what is the need of spoiling sport? Shall I growl out of my sulky manger because my comrade gets the meat? Eat it, happy dog! and be thankful. Would not that bone have choked me if I had tried it? Besides, I am accustomed to disappointment. Other fellows get the prizes which I try for. I am used to run second in the dreary race of love. Second? Psha! Third, Fourth. *Que sais-je?* There was the Bombay captain in Bess's early days. There was Edward. Here is Frederick. Go to, Charles Batchelor; repine not at fortune: but be content to be Batchelor still. My sister has children. I will be an uncle, a parent to them. Isn't Edward of the scarlet whiskers distanced? Has not poor Dick Bedford lost the race—poor Dick, who never had a chance, and is the best of us all? Besides, what fun it is to see Lady Baker deposed: think of Mrs. Prior coming in and reigning over her! The purple-faced old fury of a Baker, never will she bully, and rage, and trample more. She must pack up her traps and be off. I know she must. I *can* congratulate Lovel sincerely, and that's the fact.

And here at this very moment, and as if to add to the comicality of the scene, who should appear but mother-in-law No. 2, Mrs. Prior, with her Bluecoat boy, and two or three of her children, who had been invited, or had invited themselves, to drink tea with Lovel's young ones, as their custom was whenever they could procure an invitation. Master Prior had a fine "copy" under his arm, which he came to show to his

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patron Lovel. His mamma, entirely ignorant of what had happened, came fawning in with her old poke-bonnet, her old pocket, that vast depository of all sorts of stores, her old umbrella, and her usual dreary smirk. She made her obeisance to the matrons,—she led up her Bluecoat boy to Mr. Lovel, in whose office she hoped to find a clerk's place for her lad, on whose very coat and waistcoat she had designs whilst they were yet on his back: and she straightway began business with the dowagers—

"My Lady, I hope your Ladyship is quite well?" (a curtsey). "Dear kind Mrs. Bonnington! I came to pay my duty to you, mum. This is Louisa, my Lady, the great girl for whom your Ladyship so kindly promised the gown. And this is my little girl, Mrs. Bonnington, mum, please; and this is my big Blue. Go and speak to dear kind Mr. Lovel, Gus, our dear good friend and protector,—the son and son-in-law of these dear ladies. Look, sir, he has brought his copy to show you; and it's creditable to a boy of his age, isn't it, Mr. Batchelor? You can say, who know so well what writing is, and my kind services to you, sir—and—Elizabeth, Lizzie, my dear! where's your spectacles, you—you——"

Here she stopped, and looking alarmed at the group, at the boxes, at the blushing Lovel, at the pale countenance of the governess, "Gracious goodness!" she said, "what has happened? Tell me, Lizzie, what is it?"

"Is this collusion, pray?" says ruffled Mrs. Bonnington.

"Collusion, dear Mrs. Bonnington?"

"Or insolence?" bawls out my Lady Baker.

"Insolence, your Ladyship? What—what is it? What are these boxes—Lizzie's boxes? Ah!" the mother broke out with a scream, "you've not sent the poor girl away? Oh! my poor child—my poor children!"

"The Prince's Theatre has come out, Mrs. Prior," here said I.

The mother clasps her meagre hands. "It wasn't the darling's fault. It was to help her poor father in poverty. It was I who forced her to it. Oh, ladies! ladies!—don't take the bread out of the mouth of these poor orphans!"—and genuine tears rained down her yellow cheeks.

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"Enough of this," says Mr. Lovel, haughtily. "Mrs. Prior, your daughter is not going away. Elizabeth has promised to stay with me, and never to leave me—as governess no longer, but as——" and here he takes Miss Prior's hand.

"His wife! Is this—is this true, Lizzie?" gasped the mother.

"Yes, Mamma," meekly said Miss Elizabeth Prior.

At this the old woman flung down her umbrella, and uttering a fine scream, folds Elizabeth in her arms, and then runs up to Lovel! "My son! my son!" says she (Lovel's face was not bad, I promise you, at this salutation and salute). "Come here, children!—come, Augustus, Fanny, Louisa, kiss your dear brother, children! And where are yours, Lizzie? Where are Pop and Cissy? Go and look for your little nephew and niece, dears: Pop and Cissy in the schoolroom, or in the garden, dears. They will be your nephew and niece now. Go and fetch them, I say."

As the young Priors filed off, Mrs. Prior turned to the two other matrons, and spoke to them with much dignity: "Most hot weather, your Ladyship, I'm sure! Mr. Bonnington must find it very hot for preaching, Mrs. Bonnington! Lor'! there's that little wretch beating my Johnny on the stairs. Have done, Pop, sir! How ever shall we make those children agree, Elizabeth?"

Quick, come to me, some skilful delineator of the British dowager, and draw me the countenances of Lady Baker and Mrs. Bonnington.

"I call this a jolly game, don't you, Batchelor, old boy?" remarks the Captain to me. "Lady Baker, my dear, I guess your Ladyship's nose is out of joint."

"O Cecilia—Cecilia! don't you shudder in your grave?" cries Lady B. "Call my people, Clarence—call Bulkeley—call my maid! Let me go, I say, from this house of horror!" and the old lady dashed into the drawing-room, where she uttered I know not what incoherent shrieks and appeals before that calm, glazed, simpering portrait of the departed Cecilia.

Now this is a truth, for which I call Lovel, his lady, Mrs.

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Bonnington, and Captain Clarence Baker as witnesses. Well, then, whilst Lady B. was adjuring the portrait, it is a fact that a string of Cecilia's harp—which has always been standing in the corner of the room under its shroud of Cordovan leather—a string, I say, of Cecilia's harp cracked, and went off with a loud *bong*, which struck terror into all beholders. Lady Baker's agitation at the incident was awful; I do not like to describe it—not having any wish to say anything tragic in this narrative—though that I *can* write tragedy, plays of mine (of which envious managers never could be got to see the merit) I think will prove, when they appear in my posthumous works.

Baker has always averred that at the moment when the harp-string broke, her heart broke too. But as she lived for many years, and may be alive now for what I know; and as she borrowed money repeatedly from Lovel—he must be acquitted of the charge which she constantly brings against him of hastening her own death, and murdering his first wife Cecilia. "The harp that once in Tara's halls" used to make such a piteous feeble thrumming, has been carted off I know not whither; and Cecilia's portrait, though it has been removed from the post of honour (where, you conceive, under present circumstances it would hardly be *à propos*) occupies a very reputable position in the pink room upstairs which that poor young Clarence inhabited during my visit to Shrublands.

All the house has been altered. There's a fine organ in the hall, on which Elizabeth performs sacred music very finely. As for *my* old room, I will trouble you to smoke *there* under the present government. It is a library now, with many fine and authentic pictures of the Lovel family hanging up in it, the English branch of the house with the wolf crest, and *Gare à la louve* for the motto, and a grand posthumous portrait of a Portuguese officer (Gandish), Elizabeth's late father.

As for dear old Mrs. Bonnington, she, you may be sure, would be easily reconciled to any live mortal who was kind to her, and any plan which should make her son happy; and Elizabeth has quite won her over. Mrs. Prior, on the deposition of the other dowagers, no doubt expected to reign at

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Shrublands, but in this object I am not very sorry to say was disappointed. Indeed, I was not a little amused, upon the very first day of her intended reign—that eventful one of which we have been describing the incidents—to see how calmly and gracefully Bessy pulled the throne from under her, on which the old lady was clambering.

Mrs. P. knew the house very well, and everything which it contained; and when Lady Baker drove off with her son and her suite of domestics, Prior dashed through the vacant apartments gleaning what had been left in the flurry of departure—a scarlet feather out of the dowager's room, a shirt-stud and a bottle of hair-oil, the Captain's property. "And now they are gone, and as you can't be alone with him, my dear, I must be with you," says she, coming down to her daughter.

"Of course, Mamma, I must be with you," says obedient Elizabeth.

"And there is the pink room, and the blue room, and the yellow room for the boys—and the chintz boudoir for me—I can put them all away, oh, so comfortably!"

"I can come and share Louisa's room, Mamma," says Bessy. "It will not be proper for me to stay here at all—until afterwards, you know. Or I can go to my uncle at Saint Boniface. Don't you think that will be best, eh, Frederick?"

"Whatever you wish, my dear Lizzie!" says Lovel.

"And I dare say there will be some little alterations made in the house. You talked, you know, of painting, Mr. Lovel: and the children can go to their grandmamma Bonnington. And on our return when the alterations are made we shall always be delighted to see *you*, Mr. Batchelor—our kindest old friend. Shall we not, Frederick?"

"Always, always," said Frederick.

"Come, children, come to your teas," calls out Mrs. P. in a resolute voice.

"Dear Pop, I'm not going away—that is, only for a few days, dear," says Bessy, kissing the boy; "and you will love me, won't you?"

"All right," says the boy. But Cissy said, when the same

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appeal was made to her: "I shall love my dear mamma!" and makes her new mother-in-law a very polite curtsey.

"I think you had better put off those men you expect to dinner to-morrow, Fred," I say to Lovel.

"I think I had, Batch," says the gentleman.

"Or you can dine with them at the Club, you know," remarks Elizabeth.

"Yes, Bessy."

"And when the children have had their tea I will go with Mamma. My boxes are ready, you know," says arch Bessy.

"And you will stay and dine with Mr. Lovel, won't you, Mr. Batchelor?" asks the lady.

It was the dreariest dinner I ever had in my life. No undertaker could be more gloomy than Bedford, as he served us. We tried to talk politics and literature. We drank too much, purposely. Nothing would do. "Hang me, if I can stand this, Lovel," I said, as we sat mum over our third bottle. "I will go back and sleep at my chambers. I was not a little soft upon her myself, that's the truth. Here's her health, and happiness to both of you, with all my heart." And we drained a great bumper apiece, and I left him. He was very happy I should go.

Bedford stood at the gate, as the little pony carriage came for me in the dusk. "God bless you, sir!" says he. "I can't stand it; I shall go too." And he rubbed his hands over his eyes.

He married Mary Pinhorn, and they have emigrated to Melbourne; whence he sent me, three years ago, an affectionate letter, and a smart gold pin from the diggings.

A month afterwards, a cab might have been seen driving from the Temple to Hanover Square: and a month and a day after that drive, an advertisement might have been read in the *Post* and *Times*:—

"Married, on Thursday, 10th, at St. George's, Hanover Square, by the Reverend the Master of Saint Boniface College, Oxbridge, uncle of the bride, Frederick Lovel, Esquire, of Shrublands, Roehampton, to Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the late Captain Montagu Prior, K.S.F."

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We may hear of LOVEL MARRIED some other day, but here is an end of LOVEL THE WIDOWER. *Valete et plaudite*, you good people, who have witnessed the little comedy. Down with the curtain; cover up the boxes; pop out the gas-lights. Ho! cab! Take us home, and let us have some tea, and go to bed. Good-night, my little players. We have been merry together, and we part with soft hearts and somewhat rueful countenances, don't we?

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THE

WOLVES AND THE LAMB

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Mr. Horace Milliken, *a Widower, a wealthy City Merchant.*
George Milliken, *a Child, his Son.*
Captain Touchit, *his Friend.*
Clarence Kicklebury, *Brother to Milliken's late Wife.*
John Howell, *M.'s Butler and confidential Servant.*
Charles Page, *Foot-boy.*
Bulkeley, *Lady Kicklebury's Servant.*
Mr. Bonnington.
Coachman, Cabman; a Bluecoat Boy, another Boy (Mrs. Prior's Sons).

Lady Kicklebury, *Mother-in-law to Milliken.*
Mrs. Bonnington, *Milliken's Mother (married again).*
Mrs. Prior.
Miss Prior, *her Daughter, Governess to Milliken's Children.*
Arabella Milliken, *a Child.*
Mary Barlow, *Schoolroom Maid.*
A grown-up Girl and Child of Mrs. Prior's, Lady K.'s Maid, Cook.

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THE

WOLVES AND THE LAMB.

ACT I.

SCENE.—MILLIKEN'S *Villa at Richmond; two drawing-rooms opening into one another. The late* MRS. MILLIKEN'S *portrait over the mantelpiece; book-cases, writing-tables, piano, newspapers, a handsomely furnished saloon. The back room opens, with very large windows, on the lawn and pleasure-ground; gate, and wall—over which the heads of a cab and a carriage are seen, as persons arrive. Fruit, and a ladder on the walls. A door to the dining-room, another to the sleeping apartments, &c.*

JOHN. Everybody out; governor in the City; governess (heigh-ho!) walking in the Park with the children; Ladyship gone out in the carriage. Let's sit down and have a look at the papers. Buttons! fetch the *Morning Post* out of Lady Kicklebury's room. Where's the *Daily News*, sir?

PAGE. Think it's in Milliken's room.

JOHN. Milliken! you scoundrel! What do you mean by Milliken? Speak of your employer as your governor if you like; but not as simple Milliken. Confound your impudence! you'll be calling me Howell next.

PAGE. Well! I didn't know. *You* call him Milliken.

JOHN. Because I know him, because I'm intimate with him, because there's not a secret he has but I may have it

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for the asking; because the letters addressed to Horace Milliken, Esquire, might as well be addressed John Howell, Esquire, for I read 'em, I put 'em away and docket 'em, and remember 'em. I know his affairs better than he does: his income to a shilling, pay his tradesmen, wear his coats, if I like. *I* may call Mr. Milliken what I please; but not *you*, you little scamp of a clod-hopping ploughboy. Know your station and do your business, or you don't wear *them* buttons long, I promise you. [*Exit Page.*

Let me go on with the paper. (*Reads.*) How brilliant this writing is! *Times, Chronicle, Daily News*, they're all good, blest if they ain't. How much better the nine leaders in them three daily papers is, than nine speeches in the House of Commons! Take a very best speech in the 'Ouse now, and compare it with an article in the *Times*! I say, the newspaper has the best of it for philosophy, for wit, novelty, good sense too. And the party that writes the leading article is nobody, and the chap that speaks in the House of Commons is a hero. Lord, Lord, how the world is 'umbugged! Pop'lar representation! What *is* pop'lar representation? Dammy, it's a farce. Hallo! this article is stole! I remember a passage in Montesquieu uncommonly like it.

[*Goes and gets the book. As he is standing upon sofa to get it, and sitting down to read it, Miss Prior and the children have come in at the garden. Children pass across stage.*

Miss Prior *enters by open window, bringing flowers into the room.*

John. It *is* like it. (*He slaps the book, and seeing Miss Prior who enters, then jumps up from sofa, saying very respectfully,*) I beg your pardon, miss.

Miss Prior (*sarcastically*). Do I disturb you, Howell?

John. Disturb! I have no right to say—a servant has no right to be disturbed, but I hope I may be pardoned for venturing to look at a volume in the libery, miss, just in reference to a newspaper harticle—that's all, miss.

Miss P. You are very fortunate in finding anything to interest you in the paper, I'm sure.

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JOHN. Perhaps, miss, you are not accustomed to political discussion, and ignorant of—ah—I beg your pardon: a servant, I know, has no right to speak.

[*Exit into dining-room, making a low bow.*

MISS PRIOR. The coolness of some people is really quite extraordinary! the airs they give themselves, the way in which they answer one, the books they read! Montesquieu: "Esprit des Lois!" (*Takes book up which J. has left on sofa.*) I believe the man has actually taken this from the shelf. I am sure Mr. Milliken, or her Ladyship, never would. The other day "Helvetius" was found in Mr. Howell's pantry, forsooth! It is wonderful how he picked up French whilst we were abroad! "Esprit des Lois!" what is it? it must be dreadfully stupid. And as for reading "Helvetius" (who, I suppose, was a Roman general), I really can't understand how——Dear, dear! what airs these persons give themselves! What will come next? A footman—I beg Mr. Howell's pardon—a butler and confidential valet lolls on the drawing-room sofa, and reads Montesquieu! Impudence! And add to this, he follows me for the last two or three months with eyes that are quite horrid. What can the creature mean? But I forgot—I am only a governess. A governess is not a lady—a governess is but a servant—a governess is to work and walk all day with the children, dine in the schoolroom, and come to the drawing-room to play the man of the house to sleep. A governess is a domestic, only her place is not the servants' hall, and she is paid not quite so well as the butler who serves her her glass of wine. Odious! George! Arabella! there are those little wretches quarrelling again! [*Exit.*

Children are heard calling out, and seen quarrelling in garden.

JOHN (*re-entering*). See where she moves! grace is in all her steps. 'Eaven in her high—no—a-heaven in her heye, in every gesture dignity and love—ah, I wish I could say it! I wish you may procure it, poor fool! She passes by me—she tr-r-amples on me. Here's the chair she sets in. (*Kisses it.*) Here's the piano she plays on. Pretty keys, them fingers outhivories you! When she plays on it, I stand and listen at the drawing-room door, and my heart thr-obs in time! Fool, fool,

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fool! why did you look on her, John Howell? why did you beat for her, busy heart? You were tranquil till you knew her! I thought I could have been a-happy with Mary till then. That girl's affection soothed me. Her conversation didn't amuse me much, her ideers ain't exactly elevated, but they are just and proper. Her attentions pleased me. She ever kep' the best cup of tea for me. She crisped my buttered toast, or mixed my quiet tumbler for me, as I sat of hevenings and read my newspaper in the kitching. She respected the sanctaty of my pantry. When I was a-studying there, she never interrupted me. She darned my stockings for me, she starched and folded my chokers, and she sowed on the habsent buttons of which time and chance had bereft my linning. She has a good heart, Mary has. I know she'd get up and black the boots for me of the coldest winter mornings. She did when we was in humbler life, she did.

Enter MARY.

You have a good heart, Mary!

MARY. Have I, dear John? (*Sadly.*)

JOHN. Yes, child—yes. I think a better never beat in woman's bosom. You're good to everybody—good to your parents whom you send half your wages to: good to your employers whom you never robbed of a halfpenny.

MARY (*whimpering*). Yes, I did, John. I took the jelly when you were in bed with the influenza; and brought you the pork-wine negus.

JOHN. Port, not pork, child. Pork is the hanimal which Jews ab'or. Port is from Oporto in Portugal.

MARY (*still crying*). Yes, John; you know everything a'most, John.

JOHN. And you, poor child, but little! It's not heart you want, you little trump, it's education, Mary: it's information: it's head, head, head! You can't learn. You never can learn. Your ideers ain't no good. You never can hinterchange 'em with mine. Conversation between us is impossible. It's not your fault. Some people are born clever; some are born tall —I ain't tall.

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MARY. Ho! you're big enough for me, John.

[*Offers to take his hand.*

JOHN. Let go my 'and—my a-hand, Mary! I say, some people are born with brains, and some with big figures. Look at that great ass, Bulkeley, Lady K.'s man—the besotted, stupid beast! He's as big as a life-guardsman, but he ain't no more education nor ideers than the ox he feeds on.

MARY. Law, John, whathever do you mean?

JOHN. H'm! you know not, little one! you never can know. Have *you* ever felt the pangs of imprisoned genius? have you ever felt what 'tis to be a slave?

MARY. Not in a free country, I should hope, John Howell—no such a thing. A place is a place, and I know mine, and am content with the spear of life in which it pleases Heaven to place me, John: and I wish you were, and remembered what we learned from our parson when we went to school together in dear old Pigeoncot, John—when you used to help little Mary with her lessons, John, and fought Bob Brown, the big butcher's boy, because he was rude to me, John, and he gave you that black hi.

JOHN. Say eye, Mary, not heye (*gently*).

MARY. Eye; and I thought you never looked better in all your life than you did then: and we both took service at Squire Milliken's—me as dairy-girl, and you as knife-boy: and good masters have they been to us from our youth hup: both old Squire Milliken and Mr. Charles as is master now, and poor Mrs. as is dead, though she had her tantrums—and I thought we should save up and take the "Milliken Arms"—and now we have saved up—and now, now, now—oh, you are a stone, a stone a stone! and I wish you were hung round my neck, and I were put down the well! There's the hupstairs bell.

[*She starts, changing her manner as she hears the bell, and exit.*

JOHN (*looking after her*). It's all true. Gospel-true. We were children in the same village—sat on the same form at school. And it was for her sake that Bob Brown the butcher's boy whopped me. A black eye! I'm not handsome. But if I were ugly, ugly as the Saracen's 'Ead, ugly as that beast

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Bulkeley, I know it would be all the same to Mary. *She* has never forgot the boy she loved, that brought birds'-nests for her, and spent his halfpenny on cherries, and bought a fairing with his first half-crown—a brooch it was, I remember, of two billing doves a-hopping on one twig, and brought it home for little yellow-haired, blue-eyed, red-cheeked Mary. Lord, Lord! I don't like to think how I've kissed 'em, the pretty cheeks! they've got quite pale now with crying—and she has never once reproached me, not once, the trump, the little tr-rump!

Is it my fault (*stamping*) that Fate has separated us? Why did my young master take me up to Oxford, and give me the run of his libery and the society of the best scouts in the University? Why did he take me abroad? Why have I been to Italy, France, Jummany with him—their manners noted and their realms surveyed, by Jingo! I've improved myself, and Mary has remained as you was. I try a conversation, and she can't respond. She's never got a word of poetry beyond Watt's Ims, and if I talk of Byron or Moore to her, I'm blest if she knows anything more about 'em than the cook, who is as hignorant as a pig, or that beast Bulkeley, Lady Kick's footman. Above all, why, why did I see the woman upon whom my wretched heart is fixed for ever, and who carries away my soul with her—prostrate, I say, prostrate, through the mud at the skirts of her gownd! Enslaver! why did I ever come near you? O enchantress Kelipso! how you have got hold of me! It was Fate, Fate, Fate. When Mrs. Milliken fell ill of scarlet fever at Naples, Milliken was away at Petersborough, Rooshia, looking after his property. Her foring woman fled. Me and the governess remained and nursed her and the children. We nursed the little ones out of the fever. We buried their mother. We brought the children home over Halp and Happenine. I nursed 'em all three, I tended 'em all three, the orphans, and the lovely gu-gu-governess. At Rome where she took ill, I waited on her; as we went to Florence, had we been attacked by twenty thousand brigands, this little arm had courage for them all! And if I loved thee, Julia, was I wrong? and if I basked in thy beauty day and night, Julia, am I not a man? and if,

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before this Peri, this enchantress, this gazelle, I forgot poor little Mary Barlow, how could I help it? I say, how the doose could I help it?

Enter LADY KICKLEBURY, BULKELEY *following with parcels and a spaniel.*

LADY K. Are the children and the governess come home?

JOHN. Yes, my Lady (*in a perfectly altered tone*).

LADY K. Bulkeley, take those parcels to my sitting-room.

JOHN. Get up, old stoopid. Push along, old daddylong-legs (*aside to Bulkeley*).

LADY K. Does anyone dine here to-day, Howell?

JOHN. Captain Touchit, my Lady.

LADY K. He's always dining here.

JOHN. My master's oldest friend.

LADY K. Don't tell me. He comes from his Club. He smells of smoke; he is a low vulgar person. Send Pinhorn up to me when you go downstairs. [*Exit Lady K.*

JOHN. I know. Send Pinhorn to me, means, Send my bonny brown hair, and send my beautiful complexion, and send my figure—and, O Lord! O Lord! what an old tigress that is! What an old Hector! How she do twist Milliken round her thumb! He's born to be bullied by women: and I remember him henpecked—let's see, ever since—ever since the time of that little gloveress at Woodstock, whose picter poor Mrs. M. made such a noise about when she found it in the lumber-room. Heh! *her* picture will be going into the lumber-room some day. M. must marry to get rid of his mother-in-law and mother over him: no man can stand it, not M. himself, who's a Job of a man. Isn't he? look at him!

[*As he has been speaking, the bell has rung, the Page has run to the garden-door, and* MILLIKEN *enters through the garden, laden with a hamper, bandbox, and cricket-bat.*

MILLIKEN. Why was the carriage not sent for me, Howell? There was no cab at the station, and I have had to toil all the way up the hill with these confounded parcels of my Lady's.

JOHN. I suppose the shower took off all the cabs, sir.

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When *did* a man ever git a cab in a shower?—or a policeman at a pinch—or a friend when you wanted him—or anything at the right time, sir?

MILLIKEN. But, sir, why didn't the carriage come, I say?

JOHN. *You* know.

MILLIKEN. How do you mean I know? confound your impudence!

JOHN. Lady Kicklebury took it—your mother-in-law took it—went out a-visiting—Ham Common, Petersham—Twick'nam—doose knows where. She, and her footman, and her span'l dog.

MILLIKEN. Well, sir, suppose her Ladyship *did* take the carriage? Hasn't she a perfect right? And if the carriage was gone, I want to know, John, why the devil the pony-chaise wasn't sent with the groom? Am I to bring a bonnet-box and a hamper of fish in my own hands, I should like to know?

JOHN. Heh! (*Laughs.*)

MILLIKEN. Why do you grin, you Cheshire cat?

JOHN. Your mother-in-law had the carriage; and your mother sent for the pony-chaise. Your Pa wanted to go and see the Wicar of Putney. Mr. Bonnington don't like walking when he can ride.

MILLIKEN. And why shouldn't Mr. Bonnington ride, sir, as long as there's a carriage in my stable? Mr. Bonnington has had the gout, sir! Mr. Bonnington is a clergyman, and married to my mother. He has *every* title to my respect.

JOHN. And to your pony-chaise—yes, sir.

MILLIKEN. And to everything he likes in this house, sir.

JOHN. What a good fellow you are, sir! You'd give your head off your shoulders, that you would. Is the fish for dinner to-day? Bandbox for my Lady, I suppose, sir? (*Looks in.*) Turban, feathers, bugles, marabouts, spangles—doose knows what. Yes, it's for her Ladyship. (*To Page.*) Charles, take this bandbox to her Ladyship's maid. (*To his master.*) What sauce would you like with the turbot? Lobster sauce or Hollandaise? Hollandaise is best—most wholesome for you. Anybody besides Captain Touchit coming to dinner?

MILLIKEN. No one that I know of.

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JOHN. Very good. Bring up a bottle of the brown hock? He likes the brown hock, Touchit does. [*Exit John.*

Enter Children. *They run to* MILLIKEN.

BOTH. How d'you do, Papa? How do you do, Papa?

MILLIKEN. Kiss your old father, Arabella. Come here, George—— What?

GEORGE. Don't care for kissing—kissing's for gals. Have you brought me that bat from London?

MILLIKEN. Yes. Here's the bat; and here's the ball (*takes one from pocket*)—and——

GEORGE. Where's the wickets, Papa? O-o-o—where's the wickets? (*Howls.*)

MILLIKEN. My dear darling boy! I left them at the office. What a silly papa I was to forget them! Parkins forgot them.

GEORGE. Then turn him away, I say! Turn him away! [*He stamps.*

MILLIKEN. What! an old faithful clerk and servant of your father and grandfather for thirty years past? An old man, who loves us all, and has nothing but our pay to live on?

ARABELLA. Oh, you naughty boy!

GEORGE. I ain't a naughty boy.

ARABELLA. You *are* a naughty boy.

GEORGE. He! he! he! he! [*Grins at her.*

MILLIKEN. Hush, children! Here, Arabella darling, here is a book for you. Look—aren't they pretty pictures?

ARABELLA. Is it a story, Papa? I don't care for stories in general. I like something instructive and serious. Grandmamma Bonnington and Grandpapa say——

GEORGE. He's *not* your grandpapa.

ARABELLA. He *is* my grandpapa.

GEORGE. Oh, you great story! Look! look! there's a cab. [*Runs out. The head of a Hansom cab is seen over the garden-gate. Bell rings. Page comes. Altercation between Cabman and Captain Touchit appears to go on, during which—*

MILLIKEN. Come and kiss your old father, Arabella. He's hungry for kisses.

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ARABELLA. Don't. I want to go and look at the cab; and to tell Captain Touchit that he mustn't use naughty words.

[*Runs towards garden. Page is seen carrying a carpet-bag.*

Enter TOUCHIT *through the open window, smoking a cigar.*

TOUCHIT. How d'ye do, Milliken? How are tallows, hey, my noble merchant? I have brought my bag, and intend to sleep——

GEORGE. I say, godpapa——

TOUCHIT. Well, godson!

GEORGE. Give us a cigar!

TOUCHIT. Oh, you *enfant terrible*!

MILLIKEN (*wheezily*). Ah—ahem——George Touchit; you wouldn't mind—a—smoking that cigar in the garden, would you? Ah—ah!

TOUCHIT. Hullo! What's in the wind now? You used to be a most inveterate smoker, Horace.

MILLIKEN. The fact is—my mother-in-law—Lady Kicklebury—doesn't like it, and while she's with us, you know——

TOUCHIT. Of course, of course (*throws away cigar*). I beg her Ladyship's pardon. I remember when you were courting her daughter she used not to mind it.

MILLIKEN. Don't—don't allude to those times.

[*He looks up at his wife's picture.*

GEORGE. My mamma was a Kicklebury. The Kickleburys are the oldest family in all the world. My name is George Kicklebury Milliken, of Pigeoncot, Hants; the Grove, Richmond, Surrey; and Portland Place, London, Esquire—my name is.

TOUCHIT. You have forgotten Billiter Street, hemp and tallow merchant.

GEORGE. Oh, bother! I don't care about that. I shall leave that when I'm a man: when I'm a man and come into my property.

MILLIKEN. You come into your property?

GEORGE. I shall, you know, when you're dead, Papa. I shall have this house, and Pigeoncot; and the house in town —no, I don't mind about the house in town—and I shan't let Bella live with me—no, I won't.

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BELLA. No; *I* won't live with *you.* And *I'll* have Pigeoncot.

GEORGE. You shan't have Pigeoncot. I'll have it: and the ponies: and I won't let you ride them—and the dogs, and you shan't have even a puppy to play with—and the dairy—and won't I have as much cream as I like—that's all!

TOUCHIT. What a darling boy! Your children are brought up beautifully, Milliken. It's quite delightful to see them together.

GEORGE. And I shall sink the name of Milliken, I shall.

MILLIKEN. Sink the name? why, George?

GEORGE. Because the Millikens are nobodies — Grandmamma says they are nobodies. The Kickleburys are gentlemen, and came over with William the Conqueror.

BELLA. I know when that was. One thousand one hundred and onety-one!

GEORGE. Bother when they came over! But I know this, when I come into the property I shall sink the name of Milliken.

MILLIKEN. So you are ashamed of your father's name, are you, George, my boy?

GEORGE. Ashamed! No, I ain't ashamed. Only Kickleburry is sweller. I know it is. Grandmamma says so.

BELLA. *My* grandmamma does not say so. *My* dear grandmamma says that family pride is sinful, and all belongs to this wicked world; and that in a very few years what our names are will not matter.

GEORGE. Yes, she says so because her father kept a shop; and so did Pa's father keep a sort of shop—only Pa's a gentleman now.

TOUCHIT. Darling child! How I wish I were married! If I had such a dear boy as you, George, do you know what I would give him?

GEORGE (*quite pleased*). What would you give him, godpapa?

TOUCHIT. I would give him as sound a flogging as ever boy had, my darling. I would whip this nonsense out of him. I would send him to school, where I would pray that he might be well thrashed: and if when he came home he was still

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ashamed of his father, I would put him apprentice to a chimney-sweep—that's what I would do.

GEORGE. I'm glad you're not my father, that's all.

BELLA. And *I'm* glad you're not my father, because you are a wicked man!

MILLIKEN. Arabella!

BELLA. Grandmamma says so. He is a worldly man, and the world is wicked. And he goes to the play: and he smokes, and he says——

TOUCHIT. Bella, what do I say?

BELLA. Oh, something dreadful! You know you do! I heard you say it to the cabman.

TOUCHIT. So I did, so I did! He asked me fifteen shillings from Piccadilly, and I told him to go to—to somebody whose name begins with a D.

CHILDREN. Here's another carriage passing!

BELLA. The Lady Rumble's carriage.

GEORGE. No, it ain't: it's Captain Boxer's carriage.

[*They run into the garden.*

TOUCHIT. And this is the pass to which you have brought yourself, Horace Milliken! Why, in your wife's time, it was better than this, my poor fellow!

MILLIKEN. Don't speak of her in *that* way, George Touchit!

TOUCHIT. What have I said? I am only regretting her loss for your sake. She tyrannised over you; turned your friends out of doors; took your name out of your Clubs; dragged you about from party to party, though you can no more dance than a bear, and from opera to opera, though you don't know "God Save the Queen" from "Rule Britannia." You don't, sir; you know you don't. But Arabella was better than her mother, who has taken possession of you since your widowhood.

MILLIKEN. My dear fellow! no, she hasn't. There's *my* mother.

TOUCHIT. Yes, to be sure, there's Mrs. Bonnington, and they quarrel over you like the two ladies over the baby before King Solomon.

MILLIKEN. Play the satirist, my good friend! laugh at my weakness!

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TOUCHIT. I know you to be as plucky a fellow as ever stepped, Milliken, when a man's in the case. I know you and I stood up to each other for an hour and a half at Westminster.

MILLIKEN. Thank you! We were both dragons of war! tremendous champions! Perhaps *I am* a little soft as regards women. I know my weakness well enough; but in my case what is my remedy? Put yourself in my position. Be a widower with two young children. What is more natural than that the mother of my poor wife should come and superintend my family? My own mother can't. She has a half-dozen of little half brothers and sisters, and a husband of her own to attend to. I dare say Mr. Bonnington and my mother will come to dinner to-day.

TOUCHIT. Of course they will, my poor old Milliken; you don't dare to dine without them.

MILLIKEN. Don't go on in that manner, George Touchit! Why should not my stepfather and my mother dine with me? I can afford it. I am a domestic man and like to see my relations about me. I am in the City all day.

TOUCHIT. Luckily for you.

MILLIKEN. And my pleasure of an evening is to sit under my own vine and under my own fig-tree with my own olive-branches round about me; to sit by my fire with my children at my knees; to coze over a snug bottle of claret after dinner with a friend like you to share it; to see the young folks at the breakfast-table of a morning, and to kiss them and so off to business with a cheerful heart. This was my scheme in marrying, had it pleased Heaven to prosper my plan. When I was a boy and came from school and college, I used to see Mr. Bonnington, my father-in-law, with *his* young ones clustering round about him, so happy to be with him! so eager to wait on him! all down on their little knees round my mother before breakfast or jumping up on his after dinner. It was who should reach his hat, and who should bring his coat, and who should fetch his umbrella, and who should get the last kiss.

TOUCHIT. What? didn't he kiss *you*? Oh, the hard-hearted old ogre!

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MILLIKEN. *Don't*, Touchit! Don't laugh at Mr. Bonnington! He is as good a fellow as ever breathed. Between you and me, as my half brothers and sisters increased and multiplied year after year, I used to feel rather lonely, rather bowled out, you understand. But I saw them so happy that I longed to have a home of my own. When my mother proposed Arabella for me (for she and Lady Kicklebury were immense friends at one time), I was glad enough to give up Clubs and bachelorhood, and to settle down as a married man. My mother acted for the best. My poor wife's character, my mother used to say, changed after marriage. I was not as happy as I hoped to be; but I tried for it. George, I am not so comfortable now as I might be. A house without a mistress, with two mothers-in-law reigning over it—one worldly and aristocratic, another what you call serious, though she don't mind a rubber of whist: I give you my honour my mother plays a game at whist, and an uncommonly good game too—each woman dragging over a child to her side: of course such a family cannot be comfortable. (*Bell rings.*) There's the first dinner-bell. Go and dress, for Heaven's sake!

TOUCHIT. Why dress? There is no company!

MILLIKEN. Why? ah! her Ladyship likes it, you see. And it costs nothing to humour her. Quick! for she don't like to be kept waiting.

TOUCHIT. Horace Milliken! what a pity it is the law declares a widower shall not marry his wife's mother! She would marry you else,—she would, on my word.

Enter JOHN.

JOHN. I have took the Captain's things in the blue room, sir. [*Exeunt gentlemen, John arranges tables, &c.*

Ha! Mrs. Prior! I ain't partial to Mrs. Prior. I think she's an artful old dodger, Mrs. Prior. I think there's mystery in her unfathomable pockets, and schemes in the folds of her umbrella. But—but she's Julia's mother, and for the beloved one's sake I am civil to her.

MRS. PRIOR. Thank you, Charles (*to the Page, who has been seen to let her in at the garden-gate*), I am so much obliged to you! Good afternoon, Mr. Howell. Is my daughter—are

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the darling children well? Oh, I am quite tired and weary! Three horrid omnibuses were full, and I have had to walk the whole weary long way. Ah, times are changed with me, Mr. Howell! Once when I was young and strong, I had my husband's carriage to ride in.

JOHN (*aside*). His carriage! his coal-waggon! I know well enough who old Prior was. A merchant? yes, a pretty merchant! kep' a lodging-house, share in a barge, touting for orders, and at last a snug little place in the *Gazette*.

MRS. PRIOR. How is your cough, Mr. Howell? I have brought you some lozenges for it (*takes numberless articles from her pocket*), and if you would take them of a night and morning—oh, indeed, you would get better! The late Sir Henry Halford recommended them to Mr. Prior. He was his late Majesty's physician and ours. You know we have seen happier times, Mr. Howell. Oh, I am quite tired and faint.

JOHN. Will you take anything before the schoolroom tea, ma'am? You will stop to tea, I hope, with Miss Prior, and our young folks?

MRS. PRIOR. Thank you: a little glass of wine when one is so faint—a little crumb of biscuit when one is so old and tired! I have not been accustomed to want, you know; and in my poor dear Mr. Prior's time——

JOHN. I'll fetch some wine, ma'am. [*Exit to the dining-room.*

MRS. PRIOR. Bless the man, how abrupt he is in his manner! He quite shocks a poor lady who has been used to better days. What's here? Invitations—ho! Bills for Lady Kicklebury! *They* are not paid. Where is Mr. M. going to dine, I wonder? Captain and Mrs. Hopkinson, Sir John and Lady Tomkinson, request the pleasure. Request the pleasure! Of course they do. They are always asking Mr. M. to dinner. They have daughters to marry, and Mr. M. is a widower with three thousand a year, every shilling of it. I must tell Lady Kicklebury. He must never go to these places—never, never—mustn't be allowed.

[*While talking, she opens all the letters on the table, rummages the portfolio and writing-box, looks at cards on mantelpiece, work in work-basket, tries tea-box, and shows the greatest activity and curiosity.*

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Re-enter JOHN, *bearing a tray with cakes, a decanter, &c.*

Thank you, thank you, Mr. Howell! Oh, oh, dear me, not so much as that! Half a glass, and *one* biscuit, please. What elegant sherry! (*Sips a little, and puts down glass on tray*). Do you know, I remember in better days, Mr. Howell, when my poor dear husband——

JOHN. Beg your pardon. There's Milliken's bell going like mad. [*Exit John.*

MRS. PRIOR. What an abrupt person! Oh, but it's comfortable, this wine is! And—and I think how my poor Charlotte would like a little—she so weak, and ordered wine by the medical man! And when dear Adolphus comes home from Christ's Hospital, quite tired, poor boy, and hungry, wouldn't a bit of nice cake do him good? Adolphus is so fond of plum-cake, the darling child! And so is Frederick, little saucy rogue; and I'll give them *my* piece, and keep my glass of wine for my dear delicate angel Shatty!

[*Takes bottle and paper out of her pocket, cuts off a great slice of cake, and pours wine from wine-glass and decanter into bottle.*

Enter PAGE.

PAGE. Master George and Miss Bella is going to have their teas down here with Miss Prior, Mrs. Prior, and she's up in the schoolroom, and my Lady says you may stay to tea.

MRS. PRIOR. Thank you, Charles! How tall you grow! Those trousers would fit my darling Frederick to a nicety. Thank you, Charles! *I* know the way to the nursery.

[*Exit Mrs. P.*

PAGE. Know the way! I believe she *do* know the way. Been a having cake and wine. Howell always gives her cake and wine—jolly cake, ain't it? and wine, oh, my!

Re-enter JOHN.

JOHN. You young gormandising cormorant! What! five meals a day ain't enough for you! What! beer ain't good enough for you, hey? [*Pulls boy's ears.*

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PAGE (*crying*). Oh, oh, do-o-n't, Mr. Howell! I only took half a glass, upon my honour.

JOHN. Your a-honour, you lying young vagabond! I wonder the ground don't open and swallow you. Half a glass! (*Holds up decanter.*) You've took half a bottle, you young Ananias! Mark this, sir! When I was a boy, a boy on my promotion, a child kindly took in from charity-school, a horphan in buttons like you, I never lied; no, nor never stole, and you've done both, you little scoundrel! Don't tell *me*, sir! there's plums on your coat, crumbs on your cheek, and you smell sherry, sir! I ain't time to whop you now, but come to my pantry to-night after you've took the tray down. Come *without your jacket on*, sir, and *then* I'll teach you what it is to lie and steal. There's the outer bell. Scud, you vagabond!

Enter LADY K.

LADY K. What was that noise, pray?

JOHN. A difference between me and young Page, my Lady. I was instructing him to keep his hands from picking and stealing. I was learning him his lesson, my Lady, and he was a-crying it out.

LADY K. It seems to me you are most unkind to that boy, Howell. He is my boy, sir. He comes from my estate. I will not have him ill-used. I think you presume on your long services. I shall speak to my son-in-law about you. ("Yes, my Lady; no, my Lady; very good, my Lady." *John has answered each sentence as she is speaking, and exit gravely bowing.*) That man must quit the house. Horace says he can't do without him, but he *must* do without him. My poor dear Arabella was fond of him, but he presumes on that defunct angel's partiality. Horace says this person keeps all his accounts, sorts all his letters, manages all his affairs, may be trusted with untold gold, and rescued little George out of the fire. Now I have come to live with my son-in-law, *I* will keep his accounts, sort his letters, and take charge of his money: and if little Georgy gets into the grate, *I* will take him out of the fire. What is here? Invitation from Captain and Mrs. Hopkinson. Invitation from Sir John and Lady

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Tomkinson, who don't even ask *me*! Monstrous! he never shall go—he shall not go!

[*Mrs. Prior has re-entered; she drops a very low curtsey to Lady K., as the latter, perceiving her, lays the cards down.*

Mrs. Prior. Ah, dear madam! how kind your Ladyship's message was to the poor lonely widow-woman! Oh, how thoughtful it was of your Ladyship to ask me to stay to tea!

Lady K. With your daughter and the children. Indeed, my good Mrs. Prior, you are very welcome!

Mrs. Prior. Ah! but isn't it a cause of thankfulness to be *made* welcome? Oughtn't I to be grateful for these blessings?—yes, I say *blessings*. And I am—I am, Lady Kicklebury—to the mother—of—that angel who is gone. (*Points to the picture.*) It was your sainted daughter left us—left my child to the care of Mr. Milliken, and—and you, who are now his guardian angel I may say. You *are*, Lady Kicklebury—you are. I say to my girl, Julia, Lady Kicklebury is Mr. Milliken's guardian angel, is *your* guardian angel—for without you could she keep her place as governess to these darling children? It would tear her heart in two to leave them, and yet she would be forced to do so. You know that someone—shall I hesitate to say whom *I mean*?—that Mr. Milliken's mother, excellent lady though she is, does not love my child because *you* love her. You *do* love her, Lady Kicklebury, and oh! a mother's fond heart pays you back! But for you, my poor Julia must go—go, and leave the children whom a dying angel confided to her!

Lady K. Go! no, never! not whilst *I* am in this house, Mrs. Prior. Your daughter is a well-behaved young woman: you have confided to me her long engagement to Lieutenant—Lieutenant What-d'you-call-'im, in the Indian service. She has been very, very good to my grandchildren—she brought them over from Naples when my—my angel of an Arabella died there, and I will protect Miss Prior.

Mrs. Prior. Bless you, bless you, noble, admirable woman! Don't take it away! I must, I *will* kiss your dear generous hand! Take a mother's, a widow's blessings, Lady Kicklebury—the blessings of one who has known misfortune and seen

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better days, and thanks Heaven—yes, Heaven!—for the protectors she has found!

LADY K. You said—you had—several children, I think, my good Mrs. Prior?

MRS. PRIOR. Three boys—one, my eldest blessing, is in a wine-merchant's office—ah, if Mr. Milliken *would* but give him an order! an order from *this* house! an order from Lady Kicklebury's son-in-law!——

LADY K. It shall be done, my good Prior—we will see.

MRS. PRIOR. Another, Adolphus, dear fellow! is in Christ's Hospital. It was dear good Mr. Milliken's nomination. Frederick is at Merchant Taylors': my darling Julia pays his schooling. Besides, I have two girls—Amelia, quite a little toddles, just the size, though not so beautiful—but in a mother's eyes all children are lovely, dear Lady Kicklebury —just the size of your dear granddaughter, whose clothes would fit her, I am sure. And my second, Charlotte, a girl as tall as your Ladyship, though not with so fine a figure. "Ah, no, Shatty!" I say to her, "you are as tall as our dear patroness, Lady Kicklebury, whom you long so to see; but you have not got her Ladyship's carriage and figure, child." Five children have I, left fatherless and penniless by my poor dear husband—but Heaven takes care of the widow and orphan, madam—and Heaven's *best creatures* feed them!—*you* know whom I mean.

LADY K. Should you not like, would you object to take—a frock or two of little Arabella's to your child? and if Pinhorn, my maid, will let me, Mrs. Prior, I will see if I cannot find something against winter for your second daughter, as you say we are of a size.

MRS. PRIOR. The widow's and orphans' blessings upon you! I said my Charlotte was as tall, but I never said she had such a figure as yours—who has?

PAGE (*announces*). Mrs. Bonnington!

Enter MRS. BONNINGTON.

MRS. B. How do you do, Lady Kicklebury?

LADY K. My dear Mrs. Bonnington! and you come to dinner of course?

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MRS. B. To dine with my own son, I may take the liberty. How are my grandchildren? my darling little Emily, is she well, Mrs. Prior?

LADY K. (*aside*). Emily? why does she not call the child by her blessed mother's name of Arabella? (*To Mrs. B.*) *Arabella* is quite well, Mrs. Bonnington. Mr. Squillings said it was nothing; only her Grandmamma Bonnington spoiling her, as usual. Mr. Bonnington and all your numerous young folk are well, I hope?

MRS. B. My family are all in perfect health, I thank you. Is Horace come home from the City?

LADY K. Goodness! there's the dinner-bell,—I must run to dress.

MRS. PRIOR. Shall I come with you, dear Lady Kicklebury?

LADY K. Not for worlds, my good Mrs. Prior.

[*Exit Lady K.*

MRS. PRIOR. How do you do, my *dear* madam? Is dear Mr. Bonnington *quite* well? What a sweet sweet sermon he gave us last Sunday! I often say to my girl, I must not go to hear Mr. Bonnington, I really must not, he makes me cry so. Oh! he is a great and gifted man, and shall I not have one glimpse of him?

MRS. B. Saturday evening, my good Mrs. Prior. Don't you know that my husband never goes out on Saturday, having his sermon to compose?

MRS. P. Oh, those dear dear sermons! Do you know, madam, that my little Adolphus, for whom your son's bounty procured his place at Christ's Hospital, was very much touched indeed, the dear child, with Mr. Bonnington's discourse last Sunday three weeks, and refused to play marbles afterwards at school? The wicked naughty boys beat the poor child; but Adolphus has his consolation! Is Master Edward well, ma'am, and Master Robert, and Master Frederick, and dear little funny Master William?

MRS. B. Thank you, Mrs. Prior; you have a good heart, indeed!

MRS. P. Ah, what blessings those dears are to you! I wish your dearest little *grandson*——

MRS. B. The little naughty wretch! Do you know, Mrs.

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Prior, my grandson, George Milliken, spilt the ink over my dear husband's bands, which he keeps in his great dictionary; and fought with my child, Frederick, who is three years older than George—actually beat his own uncle!

MRS. P. Gracious mercy! Master Frederick was not hurt, I hope?

MRS. B. No; he cried a great deal; and then Robert came up, and that graceless little George took a stick; and then my husband came out, and do you know George Milliken actually kicked Mr. Bonnington on his shins, and butted him like a little naughty ram?

MRS. P. Mercy! mercy! what a little rebel! He is spoiled, dear madam, and you know by *whom*.

MRS. B. By his Grandmamma Kicklebury. I know it. I want my son to whip that child, but he refuses. He will come to no good, that child.

MRS. P. Ah, madam! don't say so! Let us hope for the best. Master George's high temper will subside when certain persons who pet him are gone away.

MRS. B. Gone away! they never will go away! No, mark my words, Mrs. Prior, that woman will never go away. She has made the house her own: she commands everything and everybody in it. She has driven me—me—Mr. Milliken's own mother—almost out of it. She has so annoyed my dear husband, that Mr. Bonnington will scarcely come here. Is she not always sneering at private tutors, because Mr. Bonnington was my son's private tutor, and greatly valued by the late Mr. Milliken? Is she not making constant allusions to old women marrying young men, because Mr. Bonnington happens to be younger than me? I have no words to express my indignation respecting Lady Kicklebury. She never pays anyone, and runs up debts in the whole town. Her man Bulkeley's conduct in the neighbourhood is quite—quite——

MRS. P. Gracious goodness, ma'am, you don't say so! And then what an appetite the gormandising monster has! Mary tells me that what he eats in the servants' hall is something perfectly frightful.

MRS. B. Everybody feeds on my poor son! You are looking at my cap, Mrs. Prior? (*During this time Mrs. Prior has been*

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peering into a parcel which Mrs. Bonnington brought in her hand.) I brought it with me across the Park. I could not walk through the Park in my cap. Isn't it a pretty ribbon, Mrs. Prior?

MRS. P. Beautiful! beautiful! How blue becomes you! Who would think you were the mother of Mr. Milliken and seven other darling children? You can afford what Lady Kicklebury cannot.

MRS. B. And what is that, Prior? A poor clergyman's wife, with a large family, cannot afford much.

MRS. P. He! he! You can afford to be seen as you are, which Lady K. cannot. Did you not remark how afraid she seemed lest I should enter her dressing-room? Only Pinhorn, her maid, goes there, to arrange the roses, and the lilies, and the figure—he! he! Oh, what a sweet sweet cap-ribbon! When you have worn it, and are tired of it, you will give it me, won't you? It will be good enough for poor old Martha Prior!

MRS. B. Do you really like it? Call at Greenwood Place, Mrs. Prior, the next time you pay Richmond a visit, and bring your little girl with you, and we will see.

MRS. P. Oh, thank you! thank you! Nay, don't be offended! I must! I must! [*Kisses Mrs. Bonnington.*

MRS. B. There, there! We must not stay chattering! The bell has rung. I must go and put the cap on, Mrs. Prior.

MRS. P. And I may come, too? *You* are not afraid of my seeing your hair, dear Mrs. Bonnington! Mr. Bonnington too young for *you*! Why, you don't look twenty!

MRS. B. Oh, Mrs. Prior!

MRS. P. Well, five-and-twenty, upon my word—not more than five-and-twenty—and that is the very prime of life!

[*Exeunt Mrs. B. and Mrs. P. hand in hand. As Captain Touchit enters dressed for dinner, he bows and passes on.*

TOUCHIT. So, we are to wear our white cravats, and our varnished boots, and dine in ceremony. What is the use of a man being a widower, if he can't dine in his shooting-jacket? Poor Mill! He has the slavery now without the wife. (*He speaks sarcastically to the picture.*) Well, well! Mrs. Milliken!

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You, at any rate, are gone; and, with the utmost respect for you, I like your picture even better than the original. Miss Prior!

Enter Miss Prior.

Miss Prior. I beg pardon. I thought you were gone to dinner. I heard the second bell some time since.

[*She is drawing back.*

Touchit. Stop! I say, Julia! (*She returns, he looks at her, takes her hand.*) Why do you dress yourself in this odd poky way? You used to be a very smartly dressed girl. Why do you hide your hair, and wear such a dowdy high gown, Julia?

Julia. You mustn't call me Julia, Captain Touchit.

Touchit. Why? when I lived in your mother's lodging, I called you Julia. When you brought up the tea, you didn't mind being called Julia. When we used to go to the play with the tickets the Editor gave us, who lived on the second floor——

Julia. The wretch!—don't speak of him!

Touchit. Ah! I am afraid he was a sad deceiver, that Editor. He was a very clever fellow. What droll songs he used to sing! What a heap of play-tickets, diorama-tickets, concert-tickets, he used to give you! Did he touch your heart, Julia?

Julia. Fiddlededee! No man ever touched my heart, Captain Touchit.

Touchit. What! not even Tom Flight, who had the second floor after the Editor left it—and who cried so bitterly at the idea of going out to India without you? You had a *tendre* for him—a little passion—you know you had. Why, even the ladies here know it. Mrs. Bonnington told me that you were waiting for a sweetheart in India, to whom you were engaged; and Lady Kicklebury thinks you are dying in love for the absent swain.

Julia. I hope—I hope—you did not contradict them, Captain Touchit?

Touchit. Why not, my dear?

Julia. May I be frank with you? You were a kind, very kind friend to us—to me, in my youth.

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TOUCHIT. I paid my lodgings regularly, and my bills without asking questions. I never weighed the tea in the caddy, or counted the lumps of sugar, or heeded the rapid consumption of my *liqueur*——

JULIA. Hush, hush! I know they were taken. I know you were very good to us. You helped my poor papa out of many a difficulty.

TOUCHIT (*aside*). Tipsy old coal-merchant! I did, and he helped himself too.

JULIA. And you were always our best friend, Captain Touchit. When our misfortunes came, you got me this situation with Mrs. Milliken—and, and—don't you see?——

TOUCHIT. Well—what?

JULIA (*laughing*). I think it is best, under the circumstances, that the ladies here should suppose I am engaged to be married—or—or, they might be—might be jealous, you understand. Women are sometimes jealous of others,—especially mothers and mothers-in-law.

TOUCHIT. Oh, you arch-schemer! And it is for that you cover up that beautiful hair of yours, and wear that demure cap?

JULIA (*slyly*). I am subject to rheumatism in the head, Captain Touchit.

TOUCHIT. It is for that you put on the spectacles, and make yourself look a hundred years old?

JULIA. My eyes are weak, Captain Touchit.

TOUCHIT. Weak with weeping for Tom Flight. You hypocrite! Show me your eyes!

MISS P. Nonsense!

TOUCHIT. Show me your eyes, I say, or I'll tell about Tom Flight, and that he has been married at Madras these two years.

MISS P. Oh, you horrid man! (*Takes glasses off.*) There!

TOUCHIT. Translucent orbs! beams of flashing light! lovely lashes veiling celestial brightness! No, they haven't cried much for Tom Flight, that faithless captain! nor for Lawrence O'Reilly, that killing Editor. It is lucky you keep the glasses on them, or they would transfix Horace Milliken, my friend the widower here. *Do* you always wear them when you are alone with him?

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Miss P. I never *am* alone with him. Bless me! If Lady Kicklebury thought my eyes were—well, well—you know what I mean,—if she thought her son-in-law looked at me, I should be turned out of doors the next day, I am sure I should. And then, poor Mr. Milliken! he never looks at *me*—Heaven help him! Why, he can't see me for her Ladyship's nose and awful caps and ribbons! He sits and looks at the portrait yonder, and sighs so. He thinks that he is lost in grief for his wife at this very moment.

Touchit. What a woman that was—eh, Julia?—that departed angel! What a temper she had before her departure!

Miss P. But the wind was tempered to the lamb. If she was angry—the lamb was so very lamblike, and meek, and fleecy.

Touchit. And what a desperate flirt the departed angel was! I knew half-a-dozen fellows, before her marriage, whom she threw over because Milliken was so rich.

Miss P. She was consistent at least, and did not change after marriage, as some ladies do; but flirted, as you call it, just as much as before. At Paris, young Mr. Verney, the attaché, was never out of the house: at Rome, Mr. Beard, the artist, was always drawing pictures of her: at Naples, when poor Mr. M. went away to look after his affairs at Saint Petersburg, little Count Posilippo was for ever coming to learn English and practise duets. She scarcely ever saw the poor children. (*Changing her manner as Lady Kicklebury enters.*) Hush—my Lady!

Touchit. You may well say, "poor children," deprived of such a woman! Miss Prior, whom I knew in very early days —as your Ladyship knows—was speaking—was speaking of the loss our poor friend sustained.

Lady K. Ah, sir, what a loss! [*Looking at the picture.*

Touchit. What a woman she was—what a superior creature!

Lady K. A creature—an angel!

Touchit. Mercy upon us! how she and my Lady used to quarrel! (*Aside.*) What a temper!

Lady K. Hm—oh, yes—what a temper! (*Rather doubtfully at first.*)

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TOUCHIT. What a loss to Milliken and the darling children!

MISS PRIOR. Luckily they have *you* with them, madam.

LADY K. And I will stay with them, Miss Prior; I will stay with them! I will never part from Horace, I am determined.

MISS P. Ah! I am very glad you stay, for if I had not you for a protector, I think you know I must go, Lady Kicklebury. I think you know there are those who would forget my attachment to these darling children, my services to—to her—and dismiss the poor governess. But while you stay I can stay, dear Lady Kicklebury! With you to defend me from jealousy I need not *quite* be afraid.

LADY K. Of Mrs. Bonnington? Of Mr. Milliken's mother; of the parson's wife who writes out his stupid sermons, and has half-a-dozen children of her own? I should think *not* indeed! *I* am the natural protector of these children. *I* am their mother. *I* have no husband. You *stay* in this house, Miss Prior. You are a faithful attached creature—though you were sent in by somebody I don't like very much.

[*Pointing to Touchit, who went off laughing when Julia began her speech, and is now looking at prints, &c., in next room.*

MISS P. Captain Touchit may not be in all things what one could wish. But his kindness has formed the happiness of my life in making me acquainted with *you*, ma'am: and I am sure you would not have me be ungrateful to him.

LADY K. A most highly principled young woman.

[*Goes out in garden and walks up and down with Captain Touchit.*

Enter MRS. BONNINGTON.

MISS P. Oh, how glad I am you are come, Mrs. Bonnington! Have you brought me that pretty hymn you promised me? You always keep your promises, even to poor governesses. I read dear Mr. Bonnington's sermon! It was so interesting that I really could not think of going to sleep until I had read it all through; it was delightful, but oh! it's still better when he preaches it! I hope I did not do wrong in copying

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a part of it? I wish to impress it on the children. There are some worldly influences at work with them, dear madam (*looking at Lady K. in the garden*) which I do my feeble effort to—to modify. I wish *you* could come oftener.

Mrs. B. I will try, my dear—I will try. Emily has sweet dispositions.

Miss P. Ah, she takes after her Grandmamma Bonnington!

Mrs. B. But George was sadly fractious just now in the schoolroom because I tried him with a tract.

Miss P. Let us hope for better times! Do be with your children, dear Mrs. Bonnington, as constantly as ever you can, for *my* sake as well as theirs! *I* want protection and advice as well as they do. The *governess*, dear lady, looks up to you as well as the pupils; *she* wants the teaching which you and dear Mr. Bonnington can give her! Ah, why could not Mr. and Mrs. Bonnington come and live here, I often think! The children would have companions in their dear young uncles and aunts; so pleasant it would be. The house is quite large enough: that is, if her Ladyship did not occupy the three south rooms in the left wing. Ah, why, *why* couldn't you come?

Mrs. B. You are a kind affectionate creature, Miss Prior. I do not very much like the gentleman who recommended you to Arabella, you know. But I do think he sent my son a good governess for his children.

[*Ladies walk up and down in front garden.*

Touchit *enters.*

Touchit. Miss Julia Prior, you are a wonder! I watch you with respect and surprise.

Miss P. Me! what have I done? a poor friendless governess—respect *me*?

Touchit. I have a mind to tell those two ladies what I think of Miss Julia Prior. If they knew you as I know you, O Julia Prior, what a short reign yours would be!

Miss P. I have to manage them a little. Each separately it is not so difficult. But when they are together, oh, it is very hard sometimes.

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Enter MILLIKEN *dressed, shakes hands with* MISS P.

MILLIKEN. Miss Prior! are you well? Have the children been good? and learned all their lessons?

MISS P. The children are pretty good, sir.

MILLIKEN. Well, that's a great deal as times go. Do not bother them with too much learning, Miss Prior. Let them have an easy life. Time enough for trouble when age comes.

Enter JOHN.

JOHN. Dinner, sir. [*And exit.*

MILLIKEN. Dinner, ladies. My Lady Kicklebury.

[*Gives arm to Lady K.*

LADY K. My dear Horace, you *shouldn't* shake hands with Miss Prior. You should keep people of that class at a distance, my dear creature.

[*They go in to dinner, Captain Touchit following with Mrs. Bonnington. As they go out, enter Mary with children's tea-tray, &c., Children following, and after them Mrs. Prior. Mary gives her tea.*

MRS. PRIOR. Thank you, Mary! You are so very kind! Oh, what delicious tea!

GEORGE. I say, Mrs. Prior, I dare say you would like to dine best, wouldn't you?

MRS. P. Bless you, my darling love, I had my dinner at one o'clock with my children at home.

GEORGE. So had we: but we go in to dessert very often; and then don't we have cakes and oranges and candied peel and macaroons and things! We are not to go in to-day; because Bella ate so many strawberries she made herself ill.

BELLA. So did you.

GEORGE. I'm a man, and men eat more than women, twice as much as women. When I'm a man I'll eat as much cake as ever I like. I say, Mary, give us the marmalade.

MRS. P. Oh, what nice marmalade! *I* know of some poor children——

MISS P. Mamma! don't, Mamma. (*In an imploring tone.*)

MRS. P. I know of two poor children at home, who have very seldom nice marmalade and cake, young people.

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GEORGE. You mean Adolphus and Frederick and Amelia, your children. Well, they shall have marmalade and cake.

BELLA. Oh, yes! I'll give them mine.

MRS. P. Darling dearest child!

GEORGE (*his mouth full*). I won't give 'em mine; but they can have another pot, you know. You have always got a basket with you, Mrs. Prior. I know you have. You had it that day you took the cold fowl.

MRS. P. For the poor blind black man! oh, how thankful he was!

GEORGE. I don't know whether it was for a black man. Mary, get us another pot of marmalade.

MARY. I don't know, Master George.

GEORGE. I *will* have another pot of marmalade. If you don't, I'll—I'll smash everything—I will.

BELLA. Oh, you naughty rude boy!

GEORGE. Hold *your* tongue! I *will* have it. Mary shall go and get it.

MRS. P. Do humour him, Mary; and I'm sure my poor children at home will be the better for it.

GEORGE. There's your basket! now put this cake in, and this pat of butter, and this sugar. Hurray, hurray! Oh, what jolly fun! Tell Adolphus and Amelia I sent it to them —tell 'em they shall never want for anything as long as George Kicklebury Milliken, Esquire, can give it 'em. Did Adolphus like my grey coat that I didn't want?

MISS P. You did not give him your new grey coat?

GEORGE. Don't you speak to me; I'm going to school— I'm not going to have no more governesses soon.

MRS. P. Oh, my dear Master George, what a nice coat it is, and how well my poor boy looked in it!

MISS P. Don't, Mamma! I pray and entreat you not to take the things!

Enter JOHN *from dining-room with a tray.*

JOHN. Some cream, some jelly, a little champagne, Miss Prior! I thought you might like some.

GEORGE. Oh, jolly! give us hold of the jelly! give us a glass of champagne.

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JOHN. I will not give you any.

GEORGE. I'll smash every glass in the room if you don't; I'll cut my fingers; I'll poison myself—there! I'll eat all this sealing-wax if you don't, and it's rank poison, you know it is.

MRS. P. My dear Master George! [*Exit John.*

GEORGE. Ha, ha! I knew you'd give it me; another boy taught me that.

BELLA. And a very naughty rude boy.

GEORGE. He, he, he! hold your tongue, miss! And said he always got wine so; and so I used to do it to my poor mamma, Mrs. Prior. Usedn't to like Mamma much.

BELLA. Oh, you wicked boy!

GEORGE. She usedn't to see us much. She used to say I tried her nerves: what's nerves, Mrs. Prior? Give us some more champagne! Will have it! Ha, ha, ha! ain't it jolly? Now I'll go out and have a run in the garden.

[*Runs into garden.*

MRS. P. And you, my dear?

BELLA. I shall go and resume the perusal of the "Pilgrim's Progress," which my grandpapa, Mr. Bonnington, sent me.

[*Exit Arabella.*

MISS P. How those children are spoilt! Goodness, what can I do? If I correct one, he flies to Grandmamma Kicklebury; if I speak to another, she appeals to Grandmamma Bonnington. When I was alone with them, I had them in something like order. Now, between the one grandmother and the other, the children are going to ruin, and so would the house too, but that Howell—that odd, rude, but honest and intelligent creature, I must say—keeps it up. It is wonderful how a person in his rank of life should have instructed himself so. He really knows—I really think he knows more than I do myself.

MRS. P. Julia dear!

MISS P. What is it, Mamma?

MRS. P. Your little sister wants some underclothing sadly, Julia dear, and poor Adolphus's shoes are quite worn out.

MISS P. I thought so; I have given you all I could, Mamma.

MRS. P. Yes, my love! you are a good love, and generous,

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Heaven knows, to your poor old mother who has seen better days. If we had not wanted, would I have ever allowed you to be a governess—a poor degraded governess? If that brute O'Reilly who lived on our second floor had not behaved so shamefully wicked to you, and married Miss Flack, the singer, might you not have been editress of the *Champion of Liberty* at this very moment, and had your opera-box every night?

[*She drinks champagne while talking, and excites herself.*

Miss P. Don't take that, Mamma!

Mrs. P. Don't take it? why, it costs nothing; Milliken can afford it. Do you suppose I get champagne every day? I might have had it as a girl when I first married your father, and we kep' our gig and horse, and lived at Clapham, and had the best of everything. But the coal-trade is not what it was, Julia. We met with misfortunes, Julia, and we went into poverty: and your poor father went into the Bench for twenty-three months—two year all but a month he did—and my poor girl was obliged to dance at the "Coburg Theatre"—yes, you were, at ten shillings a week, in the Oriental ballet of "The Bulbul and the Rose:" you were, my poor darling child!

Miss P. Hush, hush, Mamma!

Mrs. P. And we kep' a lodging-house in Bury Street, Saint James's, which your father's brother furnished for us, who was an extensive oil-merchant. He brought you up; and afterwards he quarrelled with my poor James, Robert Prior did, and he died, not leaving us a shilling. And my dear eldest boy went into a wine-merchant's office: and my poor darling Julia became a governess, when you had had the best of education at Clapham; you had, Julia. And to think that you were obliged, my blessed thing, to go on in the Oriental ballet of "The Rose and the Bul——"

Miss P. Mamma, hush, hush! forget that story.

Enter Page *from dining-room.*

Page. Miss Prior! please, the ladies are coming from the dining-room. Mrs. B. have had her two glasses of port, and her Ladyship is now a-telling the story about the Prince of Wales when she danced with him at Carlton House. [*Exit Page.*

Miss P. Quick, quick! There, take your basket! Put

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on your bonnet, and good night, Mamma. Here, here is a half-sovereign and three shillings: it is all the money I have in the world; take it, and buy the shoes for Adolphus.

MRS. P. And the underclothing, my love—little Amelia's underclothing?

MISS P. We will see about it. Good night. (*Kisses her.*) Don't be seen here,—Lady K. doesn't like it.

Enter Gentlemen *and* Ladies *from dining-room.*

LADY K. We follow the Continental fashion. We don't sit after dinner, Captain Touchit.

TOUCHIT. Confound the Continental fashion! I like to sit a little while after dinner. (*Aside.*)

MRS. B. So does my dear Mr. Bonnington, Captain Touchit. He likes a little port wine after dinner.

TOUCHIT. I'm not surprised at it, ma'am.

MRS. B. When did you say your son was coming, Lady Kicklebury?

LADY K. My Clarence? He will be here immediately, I hope, the dear boy! You know my Clarence?

TOUCHIT. Yes, ma'am.

LADY K. And like him, I'm sure, Captain Touchit! Everybody does like Clarence Kicklebury.

TOUCHIT. The confounded young scamp! I say, Horace, do you like your brother-in-law?

MILLIKEN. Well—I—I can't say—I—like him—in fact, I don't. But that's no reason why his mother shouldn't.

[*During this, Howell, preceded by Bulkeley, hands round coffee. The garden without has darkened, as if evening. Bulkeley is going away without offering coffee to Miss Prior. John stamps on his foot, and points to her. Captain Touchit, laughing, goes up and talks to her now the servants are gone.*

MRS. B. Horace! I must tell you that the waste at your table is shocking. What is the need of opening all this wine? You and Lady Kicklebury were the only persons who took champagne.

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TOUCHIT. I never drink it—never touch the rubbish! Too old a stager!

LADY K. Port, I think, is your favourite, Mrs. Bonnington?

MRS. B. My dear lady, I do not mean that you should not have champagne, if you like. Pray, pray, don't be angry! But why on earth, for you, who take so little, and Horace, who only drinks it to keep you company, should not Howell open a pint instead of a great large bottle?

LADY K. Oh, Howell! Howell! We must not mention Howell, my dear Mrs. Bonnington. Howell is faultless! Howell has the keys of everything! Howell is not to be controlled in anything! Howell is to be at liberty to be rude to my servant!

MILLIKEN. Is that all? I am sure I should have thought your man was big enough to resent any rudeness from poor little Howell.

LADY K. Horace! Excuse me for saying that you don't know—the—the class of servant to whom Bulkeley belongs. I had him, as a great favour, from Lord Toddleby. That class of servant is accustomed generally not to go out single.

MILLIKEN. Unless they are two behind a carriage-perch, they pine away, as one love-bird does without his mate!

LADY K. No doubt! no doubt! I only say you are not accustomed here—in this kind of establishment, you understand—to that class of——

MRS. B. Lady Kicklebury! is my son's establishment not good enough for any powdered monster in England? Is the house of a British merchant——?

LADY K. My dear creature! my dear creature! it *is* the house of a British merchant, and a very comfortable house.

MRS. B. Yes, as you find it.

LADY K. Yes, as I find it, when I come to take care of my departed angel's children, Mrs. Bonnington—(*pointing to picture*)—of *that* dear seraph's orphans, Mrs. Bonnington. *You* cannot. You have other duties—other children—a husband at home in delicate health, who——

MRS. B. Lady Kicklebury, no one shall say I don't take care of my dear husband!

MILLIKEN. My dear Mother! My dear Lady Kicklebury!

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(*To T., who has come forward.*) They spar so every night they meet, Touchit. Ain't it hard?

LADY K. I say you *do* take care of Mr. Bonnington, Mrs. Bonnington, my dear creature! and that is why you can't attend to Horace. And as he is of a very easy temper—except sometimes with his poor Arabella's mother—he allows all his tradesmen to cheat him, all his servants to cheat him, Howell to be rude to everybody—to me amongst other people, and why not to my servant Bulkeley, with whom Lord Toddleby's groom of the chambers gave me the very highest character?

MRS. B. I'm surprised that noblemen *have* grooms in their chambers. I should think they were much better in the stables. I am sure I always think so when we dine with Doctor Clinker. His man does bring such a smell of the stable with him.

LADY K. He! he! you mistake, my dearest creature! Your poor mother mistakes, my good Horace. You have lived in a quiet and most respectable sphere—but not—not——

MRS. B. Not what, Lady Kicklebury? We have lived at Richmond twenty years—in my late husband's time—when we saw a great deal of company, and when this dear Horace was a dear boy at Westminster School. And we have *paid* for everything we have had for twenty years, and we have owed not a penny to any *tradesman*, though we mayn't have had *powdered footmen six feet high*, who were impertinent to all the maids in the place——Don't! I *will* speak, Horace—but servants who loved us, and who lived in our families.

MILLIKEN. Mamma, now, my dear good old Mother! I am sure Lady Kicklebury meant no harm.

LADY K. Me! my dear Horace! harm! What harm could I mean?

MILLIKEN. Come! let us have a game at whist. Touchit, will you make a fourth? They go on so every night almost. Ain't it a pity, now?

TOUCHIT. Miss Prior generally plays, doesn't she?

MILLIKEN. And a very good player, too. But I thought you might like it.

TOUCHIT. Well, not exactly. I don't like sixpenny points,

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Horace, or quarrelling with old dragons about the odd trick. I will go and smoke a cigar on the terrace, and contemplate the silver Thames, the darkling woods, the starry hosts of heaven. I—I like smoking better than playing whist.

[*Milliken rings bell.*

MILLIKEN. Ah, George! you're not fit for domestic felicity.

TOUCHIT. No, not exactly.

Enter HOWELL.

MILLIKEN. Lights and a whist table. Oh, I see you bring 'em. You know everything I want. He knows everything I want, Howell does. Let us cut. Miss Prior, you and I are partners!

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ACT II.

SCENE.—*As before.*

LADY K. Don't smoke, you naughty boy! I don't like it. Besides, it will encourage your brother-in-law to smoke.

CLARENCE K. Anything to oblige you, I'm sure. But can't do without it, Mother; it's good for my health. When I was in the Plungers, our doctor used to say, "You ought never to smoke more than eight cigars a day"—an order, you know, to do it—don't you see?

LADY K. Ah, my child! I am very glad you are not with those unfortunate people in the East.

K. So am I. Sold out just in time. Much better fun being here, than having the cholera at Scutari. Nice house, Milliken's. Snob, but good fellow—good cellar, doosid good cook. Really, that salmi yesterday,—couldn't have it better done at the "Rag" now. You have got into good quarters here, Mother.

LADY K. The meals are very good, and the house is very good; the manners are not of the first order. But what can you expect of City people? I always told your poor dear sister, when she married Mr. Milliken, that she might look for everything substantial,—but not manners. Poor dear Arabella *would* marry him.

K. Would! that is a good one, Mamma! Why, you made her! It's a dozen years ago. But I recollect, when I came home from Eton, seeing her crying because Charley Tufton——

LADY K. Mr. Tufton had not a shilling to bless himself with. The marriage was absurd and impossible.

K. He hadn't a shilling then. I guess he has plenty now.

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Elder brother killed, out hunting. Father dead. Tuf a baronet, with four thousand a year if he's a shilling.

LADY K. Not so much.

K. Four thousand if it's a shilling. Why, the property adjoins Kicklebury's—I ought to know. I've shot over it a thousand times. Heh! *I* remember, when I was quite a young 'un, how Arabella used to go out into Tufton Park to meet Charley—and he is a doosid good fellow, and a gentleman-like fellow, and a doosid deal better than this City fellow.

LADY K. If you don't like this City fellow, Clarence, why do you come here? why didn't you stop with your elder brother at Kicklebury?

K. Why didn't I? Why didn't *you* stop at Kicklebury, Mamma? Because you had notice to quit. Serious daughter-in-law, quarrels about management of the house—row in the building. My brother interferes, and politely requests Mamma to shorten her visit. So it is with your other two daughters; so it was with Arabella when she was alive. What shindies you used to have with her, Lady Kicklebury! Heh! I had a row with my brother and sister about a confounded little nursery-maid.

LADY K. Clarence!

K. And so I had notice to quit too. And I'm in very good quarters here, and I intend to stay in 'em, Mamma. I say——

LADY K. What do you say?

K. Since I sold out, you know, and the regiment went abroad, confound me, the brutes at the "Rag" will hardly speak to me! I was so ill, I couldn't go. Who the doose can live the life I've led and keep health enough for that infernal Crimea? Besides, how could I help it? I was so cursedly in debt that I was *obliged* to have the money, you know. *You* hadn't got any.

LADY K. Not a halfpenny, my darling. I am dreadfully in debt myself.

K. I know you are. So am I. My brother wouldn't give me any, not a dump. Hang him! Said he had his children to look to. Milliken wouldn't advance me any more—said I did him in that horse transaction. He! he! he! so I did!

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What had I to do but to sell out? And the fellows cut me, by Jove! Ain't it too bad? I'll take my name off the "Rag," I will, though.

LADY K. We must sow our wild oats, and we must sober down; and we must live here, where the living is very good and very cheap, Clarence, you naughty boy! And we must get you a rich wife. Did you see at church yesterday that young woman in light green, with rather red hair and a pink bonnet?

K. I was asleep, ma'am, most of the time, or I was bookin' up the odds for the Chester Cup. When I'm bookin' up, I think of nothin' else, ma'am,—nothin'.

LADY K. That was Miss Brocksopp—Briggs, Brown, and Brocksopp, the great sugar-bakers. They say she will have eighty thousand pound. We will ask her to dinner here.

K. I say—why the doose do you have such old women to dinner here? Why don't you get some pretty girls? Such a set of confounded old frumps as eat Milliken's mutton I never saw. There's you, and his old mother Mrs. Bonnington, and old Mrs. Fogram, and old Miss What's-her-name, the woman with the squint eye, and that immense Mrs. Crowder. It's so stoopid, that if it weren't for Touchit coming down sometimes, and the billiards and boatin', I should die here—expire, by gad! Why don't you have some pretty women into the house, Lady Kicklebury?

LADY K. Why! Do you think I want that picture taken down: and another Mrs. Milliken? Wisehead! If Horace married again, would he be your banker, and keep this house, now that ungrateful son of mine has turned me out of his? No pretty woman shall come into the house whilst I am here.

K. Governess seems a pretty woman: weak eyes, bad figure, poky, badly dressed, but doosid pretty woman.

LADY K. Bah! There is no danger from *her*. She is a most faithful creature, attached to me beyond everything. And her eyes—her eyes are weak with crying for some young man who is in India. She has his miniature in her room, locked up in one of her drawers.

K. Then how the doose did you come to see it?

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LADY K. We see a number of things, Clarence. Will you drive with me?

K. Not as I knows on, thank you. No, Ma; drivin's *too* slow: and you're going to call on two or three old dowagers in the Park? Thank your Ladyship for the delightful offer.

Enter JOHN.

JOHN. Please, sir, here's the man with the bill for the boats; two pound three.

K. Damn it, pay it—don't bother *me*!

JOHN. Haven't got the money, sir.

LADY K. Howell! I saw Mr. Milliken give you a cheque for twenty-five pounds before he went into town this morning. Look, sir. (*Runs, opens drawer, takes out cheque-book.*) There it is, marked "Howell, 25*l.*"

JOHN. Would your Ladyship like to step down into my pantry and see what I've paid with the twenty-five pounds? Did my master leave any orders that your Ladyship was to inspect my accounts?

LADY K. Step down into the pantry! inspect your accounts? I never heard such impertinence. What do you mean, sir?

K. Dammy, sir, what do you mean?

JOHN. I thought as her Ladyship kept a heye over my master's private book, she might like to look at mine too.

LADY K. Upon my word, this insolence is too much.

JOHN. I beg your Ladyship's pardon. I am sure I have said nothing.

K. Said, sir! your manner is mutinous, by Jove, sir! if I had you in the regiment——

JOHN. I understood that you had left the regiment, sir, just before it went on the campaign, sir.

K. Confound you, sir! [*Starts up.*

LADY K. Clarence, my child, my child!

JOHN. Your Ladyship needn't be alarmed; I'm a little man, my Lady, but I don't think Mr. Clarence was a-goin' for to hit me, my Lady; not before a lady, I'm sure. I suppose, sir, that you *won't* pay the boatman?

K. No, sir, I won't pay him, nor any man who uses this sort of damned impertinence!

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JOHN. I told Rullocks, sir, I thought it was *jest* possible you wouldn't. [*Exit.*

K. That's a nice man, that is—an impudent villain!

LADY K. Ruined by Horace's weakness. He ruins everybody, poor good-natured Horace!

K. Why don't you get rid of the blackguard?

LADY K. There is a time for all things, my dear. This man is very convenient to Horace. Mr. Milliken is exceedingly lazy, and Howell spares him a great deal of trouble. Some day or other I shall take all this domestic trouble off his hands. But not yet: your poor brother-in-law is restive, like many weak men. He is subjected to other influences: his odious mother thwarts me a great deal.

K. Why, you used to be the dearest friends in the world. I recollect when I was at Eton——

LADY K. Were; but friendship don't last for ever. Mrs. Bonnington and I have had serious differences since I came to live here: she has a natural jealousy, perhaps, at my superintending her son's affairs. When she ceases to visit at the house, as she very possibly will, things will go more easily; and Mr. Howell will go too, you may depend upon it. I am always sorry when my temper breaks out, as it will sometimes.

K. Won't it, that's all!

LADY K. At his insolence, my temper is high; so is yours, my dear. Calm it for the present, especially as regards Howell.

K. Gad! d'you know I was very nearly pitching into him? But once, one night in the Haymarket, at a lobster-shop, where I was with some fellows, we chaffed some other fellows, and there was one fellah—quite a little fellah—and I pitched into him, and he gave me the most confounded lickin' I ever had in my life, since my brother Kicklebury licked me when we were at Eton; and that, you see, was a lesson to me, ma'am. Never trust those little fellows, never chaff 'em: dammy, they may be boxers.

LADY K. You quarrelsome boy! I remember you coming home with your naughty head *so* bruised. (*Looks at watch.*) I must go now to take my drive. [*Exit Lady K.*

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K. I owe a doose of a tick at that billiard-room; I shall have that boatman dunnin' me. Why hasn't Milliken got any horses to ride? Hang him! suppose he can't ride—suppose he's a tailor. He ain't *my* tailor though, though I owe him a doosid deal of money. There goes Mamma with that darling nephew and niece of mine.

Enter BULKELEY.

Why haven't you gone with my Lady, you sir? (*to Bulkeley*).

BULKELEY. My Lady have a-took the pony-carriage, sir; Mrs. Bonnington have a-took the hopen carriage and 'orses, sir, this mornin', which the Bishop of London is 'olding a confirmation at Teddington, sir, and Mr. Bonnington is attending the serimony. And I have told Mr. 'Owell, sir, that my Lady would prefer the hopen carriage, sir, which I like the hexercise myself, sir, and that the pony-carriage was good enough for Mrs. Bonnington, sir; and Mr. 'Owell was very hinsolent to me, sir; and I don't think I can stay in the 'ouse with him.

K. Hold your jaw, sir.

BULKELEY. Yes, sir. [*Exit Bulkeley.*

K. I wonder who that governess is—sang rather prettily last night—wish she'd come and sing now—wish she'd come and amuse me—I've seen her face before—where have I seen her face?—it ain't at all a bad one. What shall I do? dammy, I'll read a book: I've not read a book this ever so long. What's here?

[*Looks amongst books, selects one, sinks down in easy chair so as quite to be lost.*

Enter Miss PRIOR.

Miss PRIOR. There's peace in the house! those noisy children are away with their grandmamma. The weather is beautiful, and I hope they will take a long drive. Now I can have a quiet half-hour, and finish that dear pretty "Ruth"—oh, how it makes me cry, that pretty story!

[*Lays down her bonnet on table—goes to glass—takes off cap and spectacles—arranges her hair—Clarence has got on chair looking at her.*

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K. By Jove! I know who it is now! Remember her as well as possible. Four years ago, when little Foxbury used to dance in the ballet over the water. *Don't* I remember her! She boxed my ears behind the scenes, by jingo! (*Coming forward.*) Miss Pemberton! Star of the ballet! Light of the harem! Don't you remember the grand Oriental ballet of the "Bulbul and the Peri"?

Miss P. Oh! (*screams*). No, n—no, sir. You are mistaken: my name is Prior. I—never was at the "Coburg Theatre." I——

K. (*seizing her hand*). No, you don't, though! What! don't you remember well that little hand slapping this face? which nature hadn't then adorned with whiskers, by gad! You pretend you have forgotten little Foxbury, whom Charley Calverley used to come after, and who used to drive to the "Coburg" every night in her brougham. How did you know it was the "Coburg"? That *is* a good one! *Had* you there, I think.

Miss P. Sir, in the name of Heaven, pity me! I have to keep my mother and my sisters and my brothers. When—when you saw me, we were in great poverty; and almost all the wretched earnings I made at that time were given to my poor father then lying in the Queen's Bench hard by. You know there was nothing against my character—you know there was not. Ask Captain Touchit whether I was not a good girl. It was he who brought me to this house.

K. Touchit! the old villain!

Miss P. I had your sister's confidence. I tended her abroad on her death-bed. I have brought up your nephew and niece. Ask anyone if I have not been honest. As a man, as a gentleman, I entreat you to keep my secret! I implore you for the sake of my poor mother and her children! (*kneeling*).

K. By Jove! how handsome you are! How crying becomes your eyes! Get up; get up. Of course I'll keep your secret, but——

Miss P. Ah! ah!

[*She screams as he tries to embrace her. Howell rushes in.*

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HOWELL. Hands off, you little villain! Stir a step, and I'll kill you, if you were a regiment of captains! What! insult this lady who kept watch at your sister's death-bed and has took charge of her children! Don't be frightened, Miss Prior. Julia—dear, dear Julia—I'm by you. If the scoundrel touches you, I'll kill him. I—I love you—there—it's here—love you madly—with all my 'art—my a-heart!

MISS P. HOWELL—for Heaven's sake, Howell!

K. Pooh—ooh! (*Bursting with laughter.*) Here's a novel, by jingo! Here's John in love with the governess. Fond of plush, Miss Pemberton—ey? Gad, it's the best thing I ever knew. Saved a good bit, ey, Jeames? Take a public-house? By Jove! I'll buy my beer there.

JOHN. Owe for it, you mean. I don't think your tradesmen profit much by your custom, ex-Cornet Kicklebury.

K. By Jove! I'll do for you, you villain!

JOHN. No, not that way, Captain.

[*Struggles with and throws him.*

K. (*screams*). Hallo, Bulkeley!

[*Bulkeley is seen strolling in the garden.*

Enter BULKELEY.

BULKELEY. What is it, sir?

K. Take this confounded villain off me, and pitch him into the Thames—do you hear?

JOHN. Come here, and I'll break every bone in your hulking body. (*To Bulkeley.*)

BULKELEY. Come, come! whathever his hall this year row about?

MISS P. For Heaven's sake, don't strike that poor man!

BULKELEY. *You* be quiet. What's he a-hittin' about my master for?

JOHN. Take off your hat, sir, when you speak to a lady. (*Takes up a poker.*) And now come on both of you, cowards!

[*Rushes at Bulkeley and knocks his hat off his head.*

BULKELEY (*stepping back*). If you'll put down that there poker, you know, then I'll pitch into you fast enough. But that there poker ain't fair, you know.

K. You villain! of course you will leave this house.

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And, Miss Prior, I think you will understand that you will go too. I don't think my niece wants to learn *dancin'*, you understand. Good-bye. Here, Bulkeley!

[*Gets behind footman and exit.*

Miss P. Do you know the meaning of that threat, Mr. Howell?

John. Yes, Miss Prior.

Miss P. I was a dancer once, for three months, four years ago, when my poor father was in prison.

John. Yes, Miss Prior, I knew it. And I saw you a many times.

Miss P. And you kept my secret?

John. Yes, Ju—Jul—Miss Prior.

Miss P. Thank you, and God bless you, John Howell! There, there. You mustn't! indeed, you mustn't!

John. You don't remember the printer's boy who used to come to Mr. O'Reilly, and sit in your 'all in Bury Street, Miss Prior? I was that boy. I was a country-bred boy—that is if you called Putney country, and Wimbledon Common and that. I served the Milliken family seven year. I went with Master Horace to College, and then I revolted against service, and I thought I'd be a man and turn printer like Doctor Frankling. And I got in an office: and I went with proofs to Mr. O'Reilly, and I saw you. And though I might have been in love with somebody else before I did—yet it was all hup when I saw you.

Miss P. (*kindly*). You must not talk to me in that way, John Howell.

John. Let's tell the tale out. I couldn't stand the newspaper night-work. I had a mother and brothers and sisters to keep, as you had. I went back to Horace Milliken and said, "Sir, I've lost my work. I and mine want bread. Will you take me back again?" And he did. He's a kind kind soul is my master.

Miss P. He *is* a kind kind soul.

John. He's good to all the poor. His hand's in his pocket for everybody. Everybody takes advantage of him. His mother-in-lor rides over him. So does his Ma. So do I, I may say; but that's over now; and you and I have had our notice to quit, miss, I should say.

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MISS P. Yes.

JOHN. I have saved a bit of money—not much—a hundred pound. Miss Prior—Julia—here I am—look—I'm a poor feller—a poor servant—but I've the heart of a man—and—I love you—oh! I love you!

MARY. Oh—ho—ho!

[*Mary has entered from garden, and bursts out crying.*

MISS P. It can't be, John Howell—my dear, brave, kind John Howell. It can't be. I have watched this for some time past, and poor Mary's despair here. (*Kisses Mary, who cries plentifully.*) You have the heart of a true brave man, and must show it and prove it now. I am not—am not of your—pardon me for saying so—of your class in life. I was bred by my uncle, away from my poor parents, though I came back to them after his sudden death; and to poverty, and to this dependent life I am now leading. I am a servant, like you, John, but in another sphere—have to seek another place now; and Heaven knows if I shall procure one, now that that unlucky passage in my life is known. Oh, the coward to recall it! the coward!

MARY. But John whopped him, miss! that he did. He gave it him well, John did. (*Crying.*)

MISS P. You can't—you ought not to forego an attachment like that, John Howell. A more honest and true-hearted creature never breathed than Mary Barlow.

JOHN. No, indeed.

MISS P. She has loved you since she was a little child. And you loved her once, and do now, John.

MARY. Oh, miss! you hare a hangel,—I hallways said you were a hangel.

MISS P. You are better than I am, my dear—much, much better than I am, John. The curse of my poverty has been that I have had to flatter and to dissemble, and hide the faults of those I wanted to help, and to smile when I was hurt, and laugh when I was sad; and to coax, and to tack, and to bide my time,—not with Mr. Milliken: he is all honour, and kindness, and simplicity. Whom did *he* ever injure, or what unkind word did *he* ever say? But do you think, with the jealousy of those two ladies over his house, I could have stayed

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here without being a hypocrite to both of them? Go, John. My good dear friend, John Howell, marry Mary. You'll be happier with her than with me. There! There!

[*They embrace.*

MARY. O—o—o! I think I'll go and hiron hout Miss Harabella's frocks now. [*Exit.*

Enter MILLIKEN *with* CLARENCE—*who is explaining things to him.*

CLARENCE. Here they are, I give you my word of honour. Ask 'em, damn 'em!

MILLIKEN. What is this I hear? You, John Howell, have dared to strike a gentleman under my roof! Your master's brother-in-law?

JOHN. Yes, by Jove! and I'd do it again.

MILLIKEN. Are you drunk or mad, Howell?

JOHN. I'm as sober and as sensible as ever I was in my life, sir—I not only struck the master, but I struck the man, who's twice as big, only not quite as big a coward, I think.

MILLIKEN. Hold your scurrilous tongue, sir! My good nature ruins everybody about me. Make up your accounts. Pack your trunks—and never let me see your face again.

JOHN. Very good, sir.

MILLIKEN. I suppose, Miss Prior, you will also be disposed to—to follow Mr. Howell?

MISS P. To quit you, now you know what has passed? I never supposed it could be otherwise. I deceived you, Mr. Milliken, as I kept a secret from you, and must pay the penalty. It is a relief to me: the sword has been hanging over me. I wish I had told your poor wife, as I was often minded to do.

MILLIKEN. Oh, you were minded to do it in Italy, were you?

MISS P. Captain Touchit knew it, sir, all along: and that my motives and, thank God, my life were honourable.

MILLIKEN. Oh, Touchit knew it, did he? and thought it honourable—honourable? Ha! ha! to marry a footman—and keep a public-house? I—I beg your pardon, John Howell

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—I mean nothing against you, you know. You're an honourable man enough, except that you have been damned insolent to my brother-in-law.

JOHN. Oh, Heaven!

[*Strikes his forehead, and walks away.*

MISS P. You mistake me, sir. What I wished to speak of was the fact which this gentleman has no doubt communicated to you—that I danced on the stage for three months.

MILLIKEN. Oh, yes. Oh, damme, yes. I forgot. I wasn't thinking of that.

KICKLEBURY. You see she owns it.

MISS P. We were in the depths of poverty. Our furniture and lodging-house under execution—from which Captain Touchit, when he came to know of our difficulties, nobly afterwards released us. My father was in prison, and wanted shillings for medicine, and I—I went and danced on the stage.

MILLIKEN. Well?

MISS P. And I kept the secret afterwards; knowing that I could never hope as governess to obtain a place after having been a stage-dancer.

MILLIKEN. Of course you couldn't,—it's out of the question; and may I ask, are you going to resume that delightful profession when you enter the married state with Mr. Howell?

MISS P. Poor John! it is not I who am going to—that is, it's Mary, the schoolroom maid.

MILLIKEN. Eternal blazes! Have you turned Mormon, John Howell, and are you going to marry the whole house?

JOHN. I made a hass of myself about Miss Prior. I couldn't help her being l—l—ovely.

KICK. Gad, he proposed to her in my presence.

JOHN. What I proposed to her, Cornet Clarence Kicklebury, was my heart and my honour, and my best, and my everything—and you—you wanted to take advantage of her secret, and you offered her indignities, and you laid a cowardly hand on her—a cowardly hand!—and I struck you, and I'd do it again.

MILLIKEN. What? Is this true?

[*Turning round very fiercely to K.*

KICK. Gad! Well—I only——

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MILLIKEN. You only what? You only insulted a lady under my roof—the friend and nurse of your dead sister—the guardian of my children. You only took advantage of a defenceless girl, and would have extorted your infernal pay out of her fear. You miserable sneak and coward!

KICK. Hallo! Come, come! I say I won't stand this sort of chaff. Dammy, I'll send a friend to you!

MILLIKEN. Go out of that window, sir! March! or I will tell my servant, John Howell, to kick you out, you wretched little scamp! Tell that big brute,—what's-his-name?—Lady Kicklebury's man, to pack this young man's portmanteau and bear's-grease pots; and if ever you enter these doors again, Clarence Kicklebury, by the Heaven that made me!—by your sister who is dead!—I will cane your life out of your bones. Angel in heaven! Shade of my Arabella—to think that your brother in your house should be found to insult the guardian of your children!

JOHN. By jingo, you're a good-plucked one! I knew he was, miss,—I told you he was.

[*Exit, shaking hands with his master and with Miss P., and dancing for joy. Exit Clarence, scared, out of window.*

JOHN (*without*). Bulkeley! pack up the Capting's luggage!

MILLIKEN. How can I ask your pardon, Miss Prior? In my wife's name I ask it—in the name of that angel whose dying-bed you watched and soothed—of the innocent children whom you have faithfully tended since.

MISS P. Ah, sir! it is granted when you speak so to me.

MILLIKEN. Eh, eh—d—don't call me sir!

MISS P. It is for me to ask pardon for hiding what you know now: but if I had told you—you—you never would have taken me into your house—your wife never would.

MILLIKEN. No, no. (*Weeping.*)

MISS P. My dear kind Captain Touchit knows it all. It was by his counsel I acted. He it was who relieved our distress. Ask him whether my conduct was not honourable—ask him whether my life was not devoted to my parents—ask him when—when I am gone.

MILLIKEN. When you are gone, Julia! Why are you

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going? Why should you go, my love—that is—why need you go, in the devil's name?

Miss P. Because, when your mother—when your mother-in-law come to hear that your children's governess has been a dancer on the stage, they will send me away, and you will not have the power to resist them. They ought to send me away, sir; but I have acted honestly by the children and their poor mother, and you'll think of me kindly when—I—am—gone?

Milliken. Julia, my dearest—dear—noble—dar——the devil! here's old Kicklebury.

Enter Lady K., Children, *and* Clarence.

Lady K. So, Miss Prior! this is what I hear, is it? A dancer in my house! a serpent in my bosom—poisoning—yes, poisoning those blessed children! occasioning quarrels between my own son and my dearest son-in-law; flirting with the footman! When do you intend to leave, madam, the house which you have po—poll—luted?

Miss P. I need no hard language, Lady Kicklebury: and I will reply to none. I have signified to Mr. Milliken my wish to leave his house.

Milliken. Not, not, if you will stay. (*To Miss P.*)

Lady K. Stay, Horace! she shall *never* stay as governess in this house!

Milliken. Julia! will you stay as mistress? You have known me for a year alone—before, not so well, when the house had a mistress that is gone. You know what my temper is, and that my tastes are simple, and my heart not unkind. I have watched you, and have never seen you out of temper, though you have been tried. I have long thought you good and beautiful, but I never thought to ask the question which I put to you now:—come in, sir! (*to Clarence at door*):—now that you have been persecuted by those who ought to have upheld you, and insulted by those who owed you gratitude and respect. I am tired of their domination, and as weary of a man's cowardly impertinence (*to Clarence*) as of a woman's jealous tyranny. They have made what was my Arabella's home miserable by their oppression and their

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quarrels. Julia! my wife's friend, my children's friend! be mine, and make me happy! Don't leave me, Julia! say you won't—say you won't—dearest—dearest girl!

Miss P. I won't—leave—you.

George (*without*). Oh, I say! Arabella, look here: here's Papa a-kissing Miss Prior!

Lady K. Horace—Clarence my son! Shade of my Arabella! can you behold this horrible scene, and not shudder in heaven? Bulkeley! Clarence! go for a doctor—go to Doctor Straightwaist at the Asylum—Horace Milliken, who has married the descendant of the Kickleburys of the Conqueror, marry a dancing-girl off the stage! Horace Milliken! do you wish to see me die in convulsions at your feet? I writhe there, I grovel there. Look! look at me on my knees! your own mother-in-law! drive away this fiend!

Milliken. Hem! I ought to thank you, Lady Kicklebury, for it is you that have given her to me.

Lady K. He won't listen! he turns away and kisses her horrible hand. This will never do. Help me up, Clarence; I must go and fetch his mother. Ah, ah! there she is, there she is! [*Lady K. rushes out, as the top of a barouche, with Mr. and Mrs. Bonnington and Coachman, is seen over the gate.*

Mrs. B. What is this I hear, my son, my son? You are going to marry a—a stage-dancer? you are driving me mad, Horace!

Milliken. Give me my second chance, Mother, to be happy. You have had yourself two chances.

Mrs. B. Speak to him, Mr. Bonnington.

[*Bonnington makes dumb show.*

Lady K. Implore him, Mr. Bonnington.

Mrs. B. Pray, pray for him, Mr. Bonnington, my love—my lost abandoned boy!

Lady K. Oh, my poor dear Mrs. Bonnington!

Mrs. B. Oh, my poor dear Lady Kicklebury!

[*They embrace each other.*

Lady K. I have been down on my knees to him, dearest Mrs. Bonnington.

Mrs. B. Let us both—both go down on our knees—I *will*

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(*to her husband*). Edward, I will! (*Both ladies on their knees. Bonnington with outstretched hands behind them.*) Look, unhappy boy! look, Horace! two mothers on their wretched knees before you, imploring you to send away this monster! Speak to him, Mr. Bonnington. Edward! use authority with him, if he will not listen to his mother——

LADY K. To his mothers!

Enter TOUCHIT.

TOUCHIT. What is this comedy going on, ladies and gentlemen? The ladies on their elderly knees—Miss Prior with her hair down her back. Is it tragedy or comedy—is it a rehearsal for a charade, or are we acting for Horace's birthday? or, oh!—I beg your Reverence's pardon—you were perhaps going to a professional duty?

MRS. B. It's *we* who are praying this child, Touchit. This child, with whom you used to come home from Westminster when you were boys. You have influence with him; he listens to you. Entreat him to pause in his madness.

TOUCHIT. What madness?

MRS. B. That—that woman—that serpent yonder—that —that dancing-woman, whom you introduced to Arabella Milliken,—ah! and I rue the day:—Horace is going to mum —mum—marry her!

TOUCHIT. Well! I always thought he would. Ever since I saw him and her playing at whist together, when I came down here a month ago, I thought he would do it.

MRS. B. Oh, it's the whist, the whist! Why did I ever play at whist, Edward? My poor Mr. Milliken used to like his rubber.

TOUCHIT. Since he has been a widower——

LADY K. A widower of that angel! [*Points to picture.*

TOUCHIT. Pooh, pooh, angel! You two ladies have never given the poor fellow any peace. You were always quarrelling over him. You took possession of his house, bullied his servants, spoiled his children; you did, Lady Kicklebury.

LADY K. Sir, you are a rude, low, presuming, vulgar man. Clarence! beat this rude man!

TOUCHIT. From what I have heard of your amiable son, he

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is not in the warlike line, I think. My dear Julia, I am delighted with all my heart that my old friend should have found a woman of sense, good conduct, good temper—a woman who has had many trials, and borne them with great patience —to take charge of him and make him happy. Horace, give me your hand! I knew Miss Prior in great poverty. I am sure she will bear as nobly her present good fortune; for good fortune it is to any woman to become the wife of such a loyal, honest, kindly gentleman as you are!

Enter JOHN.

JOHN. If you please, my Lady—if you please, sir—Bulkeley——

LADY K. What of Bulkeley, sir?

JOHN. He has packed his things, and Cornet Kicklebury's things, my Lady.

MILLIKEN. Let the fellow go.

JOHN. He won't go, sir, till my Lady have paid him his book and wages. Here's the book, sir!

LADY K. Insolence! quit my presence! And I, Mr. Milliken, will quit a house——

JOHN. Shall I call your Ladyship a carriage?

LADY K. Where I have met with rudeness, cruelty, and fiendish (*to Miss P., who smiles and curtsies*)—yes, fiendish ingratitude. I will go, I say, as soon as I have made arrangements for taking other lodgings. You cannot expect a lady of fashion to turn out like a servant.

JOHN. Hire the "Star and Garter" for her, sir. Send down to the "Castle;" anything to get rid of her. I'll tell her maid to pack her traps. Pinhorn!

[*Beckons maid and gives orders.*

TOUCHIT. You had better go at once, my dear Lady Kicklebury.

LADY K. Sir!

TOUCHIT. *The other mother-in-law is coming!* I met her on the road with all her family. He! he! he! (*Screams.*)

Enter MRS. PRIOR *and* Children.

MRS. P. My Lady; I hope your Ladyship is quite well!

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Dear kind Mrs. Bonnington! I came to pay my duty to you, ma'am. This is Charlotte, my Lady—the great girl whom your Ladyship so kindly promised the gown for; and this is my little girl, Mrs. Bonnington, ma'am, please; and this is my Bluecoat boy. Go and speak to dear kind Mr. Milliken—our best friend and protector—the son and son-in-law of these dear ladies. Look, sir! He has brought his copy to show you. (*Boy shows copy.*) Ain't it creditable to a boy of his age, Captain Touchit? And my best and most grateful services to you, sir. Julia, Julia, my dear, where's your cap and spectacles, you stupid thing? You've let your hair drop down. What! what!—— (*Begins to be puzzled.*)

MRS. B. Is this collusion, madam?

MRS. P. Collusion, dear Mrs. Bonnington!

LADY K. Or insolence, Mrs. Prior?

MRS. P. Insolence, your Ladyship! What—what is it? what has happened? What's Julia's hair down for? Ah! you've not sent the poor girl away? the poor poor child, and the poor poor children!

TOUCHIT. That dancing at the "Coburg" has come out, Mrs. Prior.

MRS. P. Not the darling's fault. It was to help her poor father in prison. It was I who forced her to do it. Oh! don't, don't, dear Lady Kicklebury, take the bread out of the mouths of these poor orphans! (*Crying.*)

MILLIKEN. Enough of this, Mrs. Prior: your daughter is not going away. Julia has promised to stay with me—and—never to leave me—as governess no longer, but as wife to me.

MRS. P. Is it—is it true, Julia?

MISS P. Yes, Mamma.

MRS. P. Oh! oh! oh! (*Flings down her umbrella, kisses Julia, and running to Milliken,*) My son, my son! Come here, children. Come, Adolphus, Amelia, Charlotte—kiss your dear brother, children. What, my dears! How do you do, dears? (*To Milliken's children.*) Have they heard the news? And do you know that my daughter is going to be your mamma? There—there—go and play with your little uncles and aunts, that's good children! (*She motions off the Children, who retire towards garden. Her manner changes to one of great patronage*

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and intense satisfaction.) Most hot weather, your Ladyship, I'm sure. Mr. Bonnington, you must find it hot weather for preachin'! Lor'! there's that little wretch beatin' Adolphus! George, sir! have done, sir! (*Runs to separate them.*) How ever shall we make those children agree, Julia?

Miss P. They have been a little spoiled, and I think Mr. Milliken will send George and Arabella to school, Mamma: will you not, Horace?

Mr. Milliken. I think school will be the very best thing for them.

Mrs. P. And (*Mrs. P. whispers, pointing to her own children*) the blue room, the green room, the rooms old Lady Kick has —plenty of room for us, my dear!

Miss P. No, Mamma, I think it will be too large a party, —Mr. Milliken has often said that he would like to go abroad, and I hope that now he will be able to make his tour.

Mrs. P. Oh, then! we can live in the house, you know: what's the use of payin' lodgin', my dear?

Miss P. The house is going to be painted. You had best live in your own house, Mamma; and if you want anything, Horace, Mr. Milliken, I am sure, will make it comfortable for you. He has had too many visitors of late, and will like a more quiet life, I think. Will you not?

Milliken. I shall like a life with *you*, Julia.

John. Cab, sir, for her Ladyship!

Lady K. This instant let me go! Call my people. Clarence, your arm! Bulkeley, Pinhorn! Mrs. Bonnington, I wish you good-morning! Arabella, angel! (*looks at picture*) I leave you. I shall come to you ere long.

[*Exit, refusing Milliken's hand, passes up garden, with her servants following her. Mary and other servants of the house are collected together, whom Lady K. waves off. Bluecoat boy on wall eating plums. Page, as she goes, cries, Hurray, hurray! Bluecoat boy cries, Hurray! When Lady K. is gone, John advances.*

John. I think I heard you say, sir, that it was your intention to go abroad?

Milliken. Yes; oh, yes! Are we going abroad, my Julia?

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MISS P. To settle matters, to have the house painted, and clear. (*Pointing to Children, Mother, &c.*) Don't you think it is the best thing that we can do?

MILLIKEN. Surely, surely: we are going abroad. Howell, you will come with us of course, and with your experience you will make a capital courier. Won't Howell make a capital courier, Julia? Good honest fellow, John Howell. Beg your pardon for being so rude to you just now. But my temper is very hot, very!

JOHN (*laughing*). You are a Tartar, sir. Such a tyrant! isn't he, ma'am?

MISS P. Well, no; I don't think you have a very bad temper, Mr. Milliken, a—Horace.

JOHN. You must—take care of him—alone, Miss Prior—Julia—I mean Mrs. Milliken. Man and boy I've waited on him this fifteen year: with the exception of that trial at the printing-office, which—which I won't talk of *now*, madam. I never knew him angry; though many a time I have known him provoked. I never knew him say a hard word, though sometimes perhaps we've deserved it. Not often—such a good master as that is pretty sure of getting a good servant—that is, if a man has a heart in his bosom; and these things are found both in and out of livery. Yes, I have been a honest servant to him,—haven't I, Mr. Milliken?

MILLIKEN. Indeed, yes, John.

JOHN. And so has Mary Barlow. Mary, my dear! (*Mary comes forward.*) Will you allow me to introduce you, sir, to the futur' Mrs. Howell?—if Mr. Bonnington does *your* little business for you, as I dare say (*turning to Mr. B.*), hold gov'nor, you will!—Make it up with your poor son, Mrs. Bonnington, ma'am. You have took a second 'elpmate, why shouldn't Master Horace? (*To Mrs. B.*) He—he wants somebody to help him, and take care of him, more than you do.

TOUCHIT. You never spoke a truer word in your life, Howell.

JOHN. It's my general 'abit, Capting, to indulge in them sort of statements. A true friend I have been to my master, and a true friend I'll remain when he's my master no more.

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MILLIKEN. Why, John, you are not going to leave me?

JOHN. It's best, sir, I should go. I—I'm not fit to be a servant in this house any longer. I wish to sit in my own little home, with my own little wife by my side. Poor dear! you've no conversation, Mary, but you're a good little soul. We've saved a hundred pound apiece, and if we want more, I know who won't grudge it us, a good feller—a good master—for whom I've saved many a hundred pound myself, and will take the "Milliken Arms" at old Pigeoncot—and once a year or so, at this hanniversary, we will pay our respects to you, sir, and madam. Perhaps we will bring some children with us, perhaps we will find some more in this villa. Bless 'em beforehand! Good-bye, sir, and madam—come away, Mary! [*Going.*

MRS. P. (*entering with clothes, &c.*) She has not left a single thing in her room. Amelia, come here! this cloak will do capital for you, and this—this garment is the very thing for Adolphus. Oh, John! eh, Howell! will you please to see that my children have something to eat, immediately! The Milliken children, I suppose, have dined already?

JOHN. Yes, ma'am: certainly, ma'am.

MRS. P. I see he is inclined to be civil to me *now*!

MISS P. John Howell is about to leave us, Mamma. He is engaged to Mary Barlow, and when we go away, he is going to set up housekeeping for himself. Good-bye, and thank you, John Howell (*gives her hand to John, but with great reserve of manner*). You have been a kind and true friend to us—if ever we can serve you, count upon us—may he not, Mr. Milliken?

MILLIKEN. Always, always.

MISS P. But you will still wait upon us—upon Mr. Milliken, for a day or two, won't you, John? until we—until Mr. Milliken has found someone to replace you. He will never find anyone more honest than you, and good kind little Mary. Thank you, Mary, for your goodness to the poor governess.

MARY. Oh, miss! oh, mum!

[*Miss P. kisses Mary patronisingly.*

MISS P. (*to John*). And after they have had some refresh-

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ment, get a cab for my brothers and sisters, if you please, John. Don't you think that will be best, my—my dear?

MILLIKEN. Of course, of course, dear Julia!

MISS P. And, Captain Touchit, you will stay, I hope, and dine with Mr. Milliken? And, Mrs. Bonnington, if you will receive as a daughter one who has always had a sincere regard for you, I think you will aid in making your son happy, as I promise you with all my heart and all my life to endeavour to do. [*Miss P. and M. go up to Mrs. Bonnington.*

MRS. BONNINGTON. Well, there then, since it must be so, bless you, my children!

TOUCHIT. Spoken like a sensible woman! And now, as I do not wish to interrupt this felicity, I will go and dine at the "Star and Garter."

MISS P. My dear Captain Touchit, not for worlds! Don't you know I mustn't be alone with Mr. Milliken until—until——?

MILLIKEN. Until I am made the happiest man alive! And you will come down and see us often, Touchit, won't you? And we hope to see our friends here often. And we will have a little life and spirit and gaiety in the place. Oh, Mother! oh, George! oh, Julia! what a comfort it is to me to think that I am released from the tyranny of that terrible mother-in-law!

MRS. PRIOR. Come in to your teas, children. Come this moment, I say.

[*The Children pass, quarrelling, behind the characters, Mrs. Prior summoning them; John and Mary standing on each side of the dining-room door as the curtain falls.*

END OF "THE WOLVES AND THE LAMB."

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DENIS DUVAL

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DENIS DUVAL.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILY TREE.

O plague my wife, who does not understand pleasantries in the matter of pedigree, I once drew a fine family tree of my ancestors, with Claude Duval, captain and highwayman, *sus. per coll.* in the reign of Charles II., dangling from a top branch. But this is only my joke with her High Mightiness my wife, and his Serene Highness my son. None of us Duvals have been *suspercollated* to my knowledge. As a boy, I have tasted a rope's end often enough, but not round my neck; and the persecutions endured by my ancestors in France for our Protestant religion, which we early received and steadily maintained, did not bring death upon us, as upon many of our faith, but only fines and poverty, and exile from our native country. The world knows how the bigotry of

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Louis XIV. drove many families out of France into England, who have become trusty and loyal subjects of the British Crown. Among the thousand fugitives were my grandfather and his wife. They settled at Winchelsea, in Sussex, where there has been a French church ever since Queen Bess's time and the dreadful day of Saint Bartholomew. Three miles off, at Rye, is another colony and church of our people: another *fester Burg*, where, under Britannia's sheltering buckler, we have been free to exercise our fathers' worship, and sing the songs of our Zion.

My grandfather was elder and precentor of the Church of Winchelsea, the pastor being Monsieur Denis, father of Rear-Admiral Sir Peter Denis, Baronet, my kind and best patron. He sailed with Anson in the famous "Centurion," and obtained his first promotion through that great seaman: and of course you will all remember that it was Captain Denis who brought our good Queen Charlotte to England (7th September, 1761), after a stormy passage of nine days, from Stade. As a child I was taken to his house in Great Ormond Street, Queen Square, London, and also to the Admiral's country-seat, Valence, near Westerham, in Kent, where Colonel Wolfe lived, father of the famous General James Wolfe, the glorious conqueror of Quebec.*

My father, who was of a wandering disposition, happened to be at Dover in the year 1761, when the Commissioners passed through, who were on their way to sign the treaty of peace, known as the Peace of Paris. He had parted, after some hot words, I believe, from his mother, who was, like himself, of a quick temper, and he was on the look-out for employment when Fate threw these gentlemen in his way. Mr. Duval spoke English, French, and German, his parents being of Alsace, and Mr. —— having need of a confidential person to attend him, who was master of the languages, my father offered himself, and was accepted mainly through the

* I remember a saying of G—— Aug-st-s S-lw-n, Esquire, regarding the General, which has not been told, as far as I know, in the anecdotes. A Macaroni guardsman, speaking of Mr. Wolfe, was asked, "Was he a Jew? Wolfe was a Jewish name." "Certainly," says Mr. S-lw-n, "Mr. Wolfe was the *Height of Abraham*."

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good offices of Captain Denis, our patron, whose ship was then in the Downs. Being at Paris, Father must needs visit Alsace, our native country, and having scarce one guinea to rub against another, of course chose to fall in love with my mother and marry her out of hand. *Monsieur mon père*, I fear, was but a prodigal; but he was his parents' only living child, and when he came home to Winchelsea, hungry and penniless, with a wife on his hand, they killed their fattest calf, and took both wanderers in. A short while after her marriage, my mother inherited some property from her parents in France, and most tenderly nursed my grandmother through a long illness, in which the good lady died. Of these matters I knew nothing personally, being at the time a child two or three years old; crying and sleeping, drinking and eating, growing, and having my infantile ailments, like other little darlings.

A violent woman was my mother, jealous, hot, and domineering, but generous and knowing how to forgive. I fancy my papa gave her too many opportunities of exercising this virtue, for, during his brief life, he was ever in scrapes and trouble. He met with an accident when fishing off the French coast, and was brought home and died, and was buried at Winchelsea: but the cause of his death I never knew until my good friend Sir Peter Denis told me in later years, when I had come to have troubles of my own.

I was born on the same day with His Royal Highness the Duke of York, viz. the 13th of August, 1763, and used to be called the Bishop of Osnaburg by the boys in Winchelsea, where between us French boys and the English boys I promise you there was many a good battle. Besides being *ancien* and precentor of the French church at Winchelsea, grandfather was a perruquier and barber by trade; and, if you must know it, I have curled and powdered a gentleman's head before this, and taken him by the nose and shaved him. I do not brag of having used lather and brush: but what is the use of disguising anything? *Tout se sçait*, as the French have it, and a great deal more too. There is Sir Humphrey Howard, who served with me second-lieutenant in the "Meleager"—he says he comes from the N—f-lk Howards; but his father was

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a shoemaker, and we always called him Humphrey Snob in the gunroom.

In France very few wealthy ladies are accustomed to nurse their children, and the little ones are put out to farmers' wives and healthy nurses, and perhaps better cared for than by their own meagre mothers. My mother's mother, an honest farmer's wife in Lorraine (for I am the first gentleman of my family, and chose my motto * of *Fecimus ipsi* not with pride, but with humble thanks for my good fortune), had brought up Mademoiselle Clarisse de Viomesnil, a Lorraine lady, between whom and her foster-sister there continued a tender friendship long after the marriage of both. Mother came to England, the wife of Monsieur mon papa; and Mademoiselle de Viomesnil married in her own country. She was of the Protestant branch of the Viomesnil family, and all the poorer in consequence of her parents' fidelity to their religion. Other members of the family were of the Catholic religion, and held in high esteem at Versailles.

Some short time after my mother's arrival in England, she heard that her dear foster-sister Clarisse was going to marry a Protestant gentleman of Lorraine, Vicomte de Barr, only son of M. le Comte de Saverne, a chamberlain to His Polish Majesty King Stanislas, father of the French Queen. M. de Saverne, on his son's marriage, gave up to the Vicomte de Barr his house at Saverne, and here for a while the newly-married couple lived. I do not say the young couple, for the Vicomte de Barr was five-and-twenty years older than his wife, who was but eighteen when her parents married her. As my mother's eyes were very weak, or, to say truth, she was not very skilful in reading, it used to be my lot as a boy to spell out my Lady Viscountess's letters to her *sœur de lait*, her good Ursule: and many a smart rap with the rolling-pin have I had over my noddle from Mother as I did my best to read. It was a word and a blow with Mother. She did not spare the rod and spoil the child, and that I suppose is the reason why I am so well grown—six feet two in my stockings, and fifteen

* The Admiral insisted on taking or on a bend sable, three razors displayed proper, with the above motto. The family have adopted the mother's coat-of-arms.

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stone four last Tuesday, when I was weighed along with our pig. Mem.—My neighbour's hams at Rose Cottage are the best in all Hampshire.

I was so young that I could not understand all I read. But I remember Mother used to growl in her rough way (she had a grenadier height and voice, and a pretty smart pair of black whiskers too)—my mother used to cry out, "She suffers —my Biche is unhappy—she has got a bad husband. He is a brute. All men are brutes." And with this she would glare at Grandpapa, who was a very humble little man, and trembled before his *bru*, and obeyed her most obsequiously. Then Mother would vow she would go home, she would go and succour her Biche; but who would take care of these two imbeciles? meaning me and my grandpapa. Besides, Madame Duval was wanted at home. She dressed my ladies' heads, with very great taste, in the French way, and could shave, frizz, cut hair, and tie a queue along with the best barber in the country. Grandfather and the apprentice wove the wigs; when I was at home, I was too young for that work, and was taken off from it, and sent to a famous good school, Pocock's grammar-school at Rye, where I learned to speak English like a Briton born as I am, and not as we did at home, where we used a queer Alsatian jargon of French and German. At Pocock's I got a little smattering of Latin, too, and plenty of fighting for the first month or two. I remember my patron coming to see me in uniform, blue and white laced with gold, silk stockings and white breeches, and two of his officers along with him. "Where is Denis Duval?" says he, peeping into our schoolroom, and all the boys looking round with wonder at the great gentleman. Master Denis Duval was standing on a bench at that very moment for punishment, for fighting, I suppose, with a black eye as big as an omelette. "Denis would do very well if he would keep his fist off other boys' noses," says the master; and the Captain gave me a seven-shilling piece, and I spent it all but twopence before the night was over, I remember. Whilst I was at Pocock's, I boarded with Mr. Rudge, a tradesman, who, besides being a grocer at Rye, was in the seafaring way, and part owner of a fishing-boat; and he took *some very queer fish* in his nets, as you shall

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hear soon. He was a chief man among the Wesleyans, and I attended his church with him, not paying much attention to those most serious and sacred things in my early years, when I was a thoughtless boy, caring for nothing but lollipops, hoops, and marbles.

Captain Denis was a very pleasant lively gentleman, and on this day he asked the master, Mr. Coates, what was the Latin for a holiday, and hoped Mr. C. would give one to his boys. Of course we sixty boys shouted yes to that proposal; and as for me, Captain Denis cried out, "Mr. Coates, I *press* this fellow with the black eye here, and intend to take him to dine with me at the 'Star.'" You may be sure I skipped off my bench, and followed my patron. He and his two officers went to the "Star," and after dinner called for a crown bowl of punch, and though I would drink none of it, never having been able to bear the taste of rum or brandy, I was glad to come out and sit with the gentlemen, who seemed to be amused with my childish prattle. Captain Denis asked me what I learned, and I dare say I bragged of my little learning: in fact I remember talking in a pompous way about Corderius and Cornelius Nepos; and I have no doubt gave myself very grand airs. He asked whether I liked Mr. Rudge, the grocer with whom I boarded. I did not like him much, I said; but I hated Miss Rudge and Bevil the apprentice most because they were always——here I stopped. "But there is no use in telling tales out of school," says I. "We don't do that at Pocock's, we don't."

And what was my mother going to make of me? I said I should like to be a sailor, but a gentleman sailor, and fight for King George. And if I did I would bring all my prize-money home to Agnes, that is, almost all of it—only keep a little of it for myself.

"And so you like the sea, and go out sometimes?" asks Mr. Denis.

Oh, yes, I went out fishing. Mr. Rudge had a half share of a boat along with grandfather, and I used to help to clean her, and was taught to steer her, with many a precious slap on the head if I got her in the wind; and they said I was a very good look-out. I could see well, and remember bluffs

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LITTLE DENIS DANCES AND SINGS BEFORE THE NAVY GENTLEMEN.

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and headlands and so forth; and I mentioned several places, points of our coasts, ay, and the French coast too.

"And what do you fish for?" asks the Captain.

"Oh, sir, I'm not to say anything about that, Mr. Rudge says!" on which the gentlemen roared with laughter. *They* knew Master Rudge's game, though I in my innocence did not understand it.

"And so you won't have a drop of punch?" asks Captain Denis.

"No, sir, I made a vow I would not, when I saw Miss Rudge so queer."

"Miss Rudge is often queer, is she?"

"Yes, the nasty pig! And she calls names, and slips downstairs, and knocks the cups and saucers about, and fights the apprentice, and—but I mustn't say anything more. I never tell tales, I don't!"

In this way I went on prattling with my patron and his friends, and they made me sing them a song in French, and a song in German, and they laughed and seemed amused at my antics and capers. Captain Denis walked home with me to our lodgings, and I told him how I liked Sunday the best day of the week—that is, every other Sunday—because I went away quite early, and walked three miles to mother and grandfather at Winchelsea, and saw Agnes.

And who, pray, was Agnes? To-day her name is Agnes Duval, and she sits at her work-table hard by. The lot of my life has been changed by knowing her. To win such a prize in life's lottery is given but to very very few. What I have done (of any worth) has been done in trying to deserve her. I might have remained, but for her, in my humble native lot, to be neither honest nor happy, but that my good angel yonder succoured me. All I have I owe to her: but I pay with all I have, and what creature can do more?

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CHAPTER II.

THE HOUSE OF SAVERNE.

MADEMOISELLE DE SAVERNE came from Alsace, where her family occupied a much higher rank than that held by the worthy Protestant elder from whom her humble servant is descended. Her mother was a Viomesnil, her father was of a noble Alsatian family, Counts of Barr and Saverne. The old Count de Saverne was alive, and a chamberlain in the Court of His Polish Majesty good King Stanislas at Nanci, when his son the Vicomte de Barr, a man already advanced in years, brought home his blooming young bride to that pretty little capital.

The Count de Saverne was a brisk and cheery old gentleman, as his son was gloomy and severe. The Count's hotel at Nanci was one of the gayest of the little Court. His Protestantism was by no means austere. He was even known to regret that there were no French convents for noble damsels of the Protestant confession, as there were across the Rhine, where his own two daughters might be bestowed out of the way. Mesdemoiselles de Saverne were ungainly in appearance,

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fierce and sour in temper, resembling, in these particulars, their brother Monsieur le Baron de Barr.

In his youth, Monsieur de Barr had served not without distinction, being engaged against Messieurs the English at Hastenbeck and Laufeldt, where he had shown both courage and capacity. His Protestantism prevented his promotion in the army. He left it, steadfast in his faith, but soured in his temper. He did not care for whist or music, like his easy old father. His appearance at the Count's little suppers was as cheerful as a death's-head at a feast. Monsieur de Barr only frequented these entertainments to give pleasure to his young wife, who pined and was wretched in the solitary family mansion of Saverne, where the Vicomte took up his residence when first married.

He was of an awful temper, and subject to storms of passion. Being a very conscientious man, he suffered extremely after one of these ebullitions of rage. Between his alternations of anger and remorse, his life was a sad one; his household trembled before him, and especially the poor little wife whom he had brought out of her quiet country village to be the victim of his rage and repentances. More than once she fled to the old Count of Saverne at Nanci, and the kindly selfish old gentleman used his feeble endeavours to protect his poor little daughter-in-law. Quickly after these quarrels letters would arrive, containing vows of the most abject repentance on the Baron's part. These matrimonial campaigns followed a regular course. First rose the outbreak of temper; then the lady's flight ensued to papa-in-law at Nanci; then came letters expressive of grief; then the repentant criminal himself arrived, whose anguish and cries of *mea culpa* were more insupportable than his outbreaks of rage. After a few years, Madame de Barr lived almost entirely with her father-in-law at Nanci, and was scarcely seen in her husband's gloomy mansion of Saverne.

For some years no child was born of this most unhappy union. Just when poor King Stanislas came by his lamentable death (being burned at his own fire), the old Count de Saverne died, and his son found that he inherited little more than his father's name and title of Saverne, the family estate

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being greatly impoverished by the late Count's extravagant and indolent habits, and much weighed down by the portions awarded to the Demoiselles de Saverne, the elderly sisters of the present elderly lord.

The town house at Nanci was shut up for a while; and the new Lord of Saverne retired to his castle with his sisters and his wife. With his Catholic neighbours the stern Protestant gentleman had little communion; and the society which frequented his dull house chiefly consisted of Protestant clergymen who came from the other side of the Rhine. Along its left bank, which had only become French territory of late years, the French and German languages were spoken indifferently; in the latter language Monsieur de Saverne was called the Herr von Zabern. After his father's death, Herr von Zabern may have melted a little, but he soon became as moody, violent, and ill-conditioned as ever the Herr von Barr had been. Saverne was a little country town, with the crumbling old Hôtel de Saverne in the centre of the place, and a straggling street stretching on either side. Behind the house were melancholy gardens, squared and clipped after the ancient French fashion, and, beyond the garden wall, some fields and woods, part of the estate of the Saverne family. These fields and woods were fringed by another great forest, which had once been the property of the house of Saverne, but had been purchased from the late easy proprietor by Messeigneurs de Rohan, Princes of the Empire, of France, and the Church, Cardinals, and Archbishops of Strasbourg, between whom and their gloomy Protestant neighbour their was no good-will. Not only questions of faith separated them, but questions of *chasse*. The Count de Saverne, who loved shooting, and beat his meagre woods for game with a couple of lean dogs, and a fowling-piece over his shoulder, sometimes came in sight of the grand hunting-parties of Monseigneur the Cardinal, who went to the chase like a Prince as he was, with piqueurs and horn-blowers, whole packs of dogs, and a troop of gentlemen in his uniform. Not seldom his Eminence's keepers and Monsieur de Saverne's solitary garde-chasse had quarrels. "Tell your master that I will shoot any red-legs which come upon my land," Monsieur de Saverne

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said in one of these controversies, as he held up a partridge which he had just brought down; and the keeper knew the moody nobleman would be true to his word.

Two neighbours so ill disposed towards one another were speedily at law; and in the courts at Strasbourg a poor provincial gentleman was likely to meet with scanty justice when opposed to such a powerful enemy as the Prince Archbishop of the province, one of the greatest noblemen of the kingdom. Boundary questions, in a land where there are no hedges—game, forest, and fishery questions—how can I tell, who am no lawyer, what set the gentlemen at loggerheads? In later days, I met one Monsieur Georgel, an Abbé, who had been a secretary of the Prince Cardinal, and he told me that Monsieur de Saverne was a headlong, violent, ill-conditioned little *mauvais coucheur*, as they say in France, and ready to quarrel with or without a reason.

These quarrels naturally took the Count de Saverne to his advocates and lawyers at Strasbourg, and he would absent himself for days from home, where his poor wife was perhaps not sorry to be rid of him. It chanced, on one of these expeditions to the chief town of his province, that he fell in with a former comrade in his campaigns of Hastenbeck and Laufeldt, an officer of Soubise's regiment, the Baron de la Motte.* La Motte had been destined to the Church, like many cadets of good family, but, his elder brother dying, he was released from the tonsure and the seminary, and entered the army under good protection. Mesdemoiselles de Saverne remembered this Monsieur de la Motte at Nanci in old days. He bore the worst of characters; he was gambler, intriguer, duellist, profligate. I suspect that most gentlemen's reputations come off ill under the tongues of these old ladies, and have heard *of other countries* where *mesdemoiselles* are equally hard to please. "Well, have we not all our faults?" I imagine Monsieur de Saverne saying, in a rage, "Is there no such thing as calumny? Are we never to repent, if we have

* That unlucky Prince de Rohan was to suffer by another Delamotte, who, with his "Valoise" of a wife, played such a notorious part in the famous "diamond necklace" business; but the two *worthies* were not, I believe, related.—D. D.

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been wrong? I know he has led a wild youth. Others may have done as much. But prodigals have been reclaimed ere now, and I for my part will not turn my back on this one." "Ah, I wish he had!" De la Motte said to me myself in later days; "but it was his fate, his fate!"

One day, then, the Count de Saverne returns home from Strasbourg with his new friend; presents the Baron de la Motte to the ladies of his house, makes the gloomy place as cheerful as he can for his guest, brings forth the best wine from his *cave*, and beats his best covers for game. I myself knew the Baron some years later:—a handsome, tall, sallow-faced man, with a shifty eye, a soft voice, and a grand manner. Monsieur de Saverne for his part was short, black, and ill-favoured, as I have heard my mother say. But Mrs. Duval did not love him, fancying that he ill-treated her Biche. Where she disliked people, my worthy parent would never allow them a single good quality; but she always averred that Monsieur de la Motte was a perfect fine gentleman.

The intimacy between these two gentlemen increased apace. Monsieur de la Motte was ever welcome at Saverne: a room in the house was called his room: their visitor was an acquaintance of their enemy the Cardinal also, and would often come from the one château to the other. Laughingly he would tell how angry Monseigneur was with his neighbour. He wished he could make peace between the two houses. He gave good advice to Monsieur de Saverne, and pointed out the danger he ran in provoking so powerful an adversary. Men had been imprisoned for life for less reason. The Cardinal might get a *lettre de cachet* against his obstinate opponent. He could, besides, ruin Saverne with fines and law costs. The contest between the two was quite unequal, and the weaker party must inevitably be crushed, unless these unhappy disputes should cease. As far as the ladies of the house dared speak, they coincided in the opinion of Monsieur de la Motte, and were for submission and reconciliation with their neighbours. Madame de Saverne's own relations heard of the feud, and implored the Count to bring it to an end. It was one of these, the Baron de Viomesnil, going to command in Corsica, who entreated Monsieur de Saverne to accompany him on the cam-

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paign. Anywhere the Count was safer than in his own house with an implacable and irresistible enemy at his gate. Monsieur de Saverne yielded to his kinsman's importunities. He took down his sword and pistols of Laufeldt from the wall, where they had hung for twenty years. He set the affairs of his house in order, and after solemnly assembling his family, and on his knees confiding it to the gracious protection of Heaven, he left home to join the suite of the French General.

A few weeks after he left home—several years after his marriage—his wife wrote to inform him that she was likely to be a mother. The stern man, who had been very unhappy previously, and chose to think that his wife's barrenness was a punishment of Heaven for some crime of his or hers, was very much moved by this announcement. I have still at home a German Bible which he used, and in which is written in the German a very affecting prayer composed by him, imploring the Divine blessing upon the child about to be born, and hoping that this infant might grow in grace, and bring peace and love and unity into the household. It would appear that he made no doubt he should have a son. His hope and aim were to save in every possible way for this child. I have read many letters of his which he sent from Corsica to his wife, and which she kept. They were full of strange minute orders, as to the rearing and education of this son that was to be born. He enjoined saving amounting to niggardliness in his household, and calculated how much might be put away in ten, in twenty years, so that the coming heir might have a property worthy of his ancient name. In case he should fall in action, he laid commands upon his wife to pursue a system of the most rigid economy, so that the child at coming of age might be able to appear creditably in the world. In these letters, I remember, the events of the campaign were dismissed in a very few words; the main part of the letters consisted of prayers, speculations, and prophecies regarding the child, and sermons couched in the language of the writer's stern creed. When the child was born, and a girl appeared in place of the boy, upon whom the poor father had set his heart, I hear the family were so dismayed, that they hardly dared to break the news to the chief of the house.

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Who told me? The same man who said he wished he had never seen M. de Saverne: the man for whom the unhappy gentleman had conceived a warm friendship;—the man who was to bring a mysterious calamity upon those whom, as I do think, and in his selfish way, he loved sincerely, and he spoke at a time when he could have little desire to deceive me.

The lord of the castle is gone on the campaign. The *châtelaine* is left alone in her melancholy tower with her two dismal duennas. My good mother, speaking in later days about these matters, took up the part of her Biche against the ladies of Barr and their brother, and always asserted that the tyranny of the duennas, and the meddling, and the verbosity, and the ill-temper of M. de Saverne himself, brought about the melancholy events which now presently ensued. The Count de Saverne was a little man (my mother said) who loved to hear himself talk, and who held forth from morning till night. His life was a fuss. He would weigh the coffee, and count the lumps of sugar, and have a finger in every pie in his frugal house. Night and morning he preached sermons to his family, and he continued to preach when not *en chaire*, laying down the law upon all subjects, untiringly voluble. Cheerfulness in the company of such a man was hypocrisy. Mesdames de Barr had to disguise weariness, to assume an air of contentment, and to appear to be interested when the Count preached. As for the Count's sisters, they were accustomed to listen to their brother and lord with respectful submission. They had a hundred domestic occupations: they had baking and boiling, and pickling, and washing, and endless embroidery: the life of the little château was quite supportable to them. They knew no better. Even in their father's days at Nanci, the ungainly women kept pretty much aloof from the world, and were little better than domestic servants in waiting on Monseigneur.

And Madame de Saverne, on her first entrance into the family, accepted the subordinate position meekly enough. She spun and she bleached, and she worked great embroideries, and busied herself about her house, and listened demurely whilst Monsieur le Comte was preaching. But then there

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came a time when her duties interested her no more, when his sermons became especially wearisome, when sharp words passed between her and her lord, and the poor thing exhibited symptoms of impatience and revolt. And with the revolt arose awful storms and domestic battles; and after battles, submission, reconciliation, forgiveness, hypocrisy.

It has been said that Monsieur de Saverne loved the sound of his own croaking voice, and to hold forth to his own congregation. Night after night he and his friend Monsieur de la Motte would have religious disputes together, in which the Huguenot gentleman flattered himself that he constantly had the better of the ex-pupil of the seminary. I was not present naturally, not setting my foot on French ground until five-and-twenty years after, but I can fancy Madame the Countess sitting at her tambour-frame, and the old duenna ladies at their cards, and the combat of the churches going on between these two champions in the little old saloon of the Hôtel de Saverne. "As I hope for pardon," Monsieur de la Motte said to me at a supreme moment of his life, "and to meet those whom on earth I loved, and made unhappy, no wrong passed between Clarisse and me, save that wrong which consisted in disguising from her husband the regard we had for one another. Once, twice, thrice, I went away from their house, but that unhappy Saverne would bring me back, and I was only too glad to return. I would let him talk for hours—I own it—so that I might be near Clarisse. I had to answer from time to time, and rubbed up my old seminary learning to reply to his sermons. I must often have spoken at random, for my thoughts were far away from the poor man's *radotages*, and he could no more change my convictions than he could change the colour of my skin. Hours and hours thus passed away. They would have been intolerably tedious to others: they were not so to me. I preferred that gloomy little château to the finest place in Europe. To see Clarisse, was all I asked. Denis! There is a power irresistible impelling all of us. From the moment I first set eyes on her, I knew she was my fate. I shot an English grenadier at Hastenbeck, who would have bayoneted poor Saverne but for me. As I lifted him up from the ground, I thought, 'I shall have to repent of ever

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having seen that man.' I felt the same thing, Duval, when I saw you." And as the unhappy gentleman spoke, I remembered how I for my part felt a singular and unpleasant sensation as of terror and approaching evil when first I looked at that handsome, ill-omened face.

I thankfully believe the words which Monsieur de la Motte spoke to me at a time when he could have no cause to disguise the truth; and am assured of the innocence of the Countess de Saverne. Poor lady! if she erred in thought, she had to pay so awful a penalty for her crime, that we humbly hope it has been forgiven her. She was not true to her husband, though she did him no wrong. If, while trembling before him, she yet had dissimulation enough to smile and be merry, I suppose no preacher or husband would be very angry with her for *that* hypocrisy. I have seen a slave in the West Indies soundly cuffed for looking sulky: we expect our negroes to be obedient, and to be happy too.

Now when Monsieur de Saverne went away to Corsica, I suspect he was strongly advised to take that step by his friend Monsieur de la Motte. When he was gone, Monsieur de la Motte did not present himself at the Hôtel de Saverne, where an old schoolfellow of his, a pastor and preacher from Kehl, on the German Rhine bank, was installed in command of the little garrison, from which its natural captain had been obliged to withdraw; but there is no doubt that poor Clarisse deceived this gentleman and her two sisters-in-law, and acted towards them with a very culpable hypocrisy.

Although there was a deadly feud between the two châteaux of Saverne—namely, the Cardinal's new-built castle in the Park, and the Count's hotel in the little town—yet each house knew more or less of the other's doings. When the Prince Cardinal and his Court were at Saverne, Mesdemoiselles de Barr were kept perfectly well informed of all the festivities which they did not share. In our little Fareport here do not the Miss Prys, my neighbours, know what I have for dinner, the amount of my income, the price of my wife's last gown, and the items of my son's, Captain Scapegrace's, tailor's bill. No doubt the ladies of Barr were equally well informed of the doings of the Prince Coadjutor and his Court. Such gambling,

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such splendour, such painted hussies from Strasbourg, such plays, masquerades, and orgies as took place in that castle! Mesdemoiselles had the very latest particulars of all these horrors, and the Cardinal's castle was to them as the castle of a wicked ogre. From her little dingy tower at night Madame de Saverne could look out, and see the Cardinal's sixty palace windows all aflame. Of summer nights, gusts of unhallowed music would be heard from the great house, where dancing festivals, theatrical pieces even, were performed. Though Madame de Saverne was forbidden by her husband to frequent those assemblies, the townspeople were up to the palace from time to time, and Madame could not help hearing of the doings there. In spite of the Count's prohibition, his gardener poached in the Cardinal's woods; one or two of the servants were smuggled in to see a fête or a ball; then Madame's own woman went; then Madame herself began to have a wicked longing to go, as Madame's first ancestress had for the fruit of the forbidden tree. Is not the apple always ripe on that tree, and does not the tempter for ever invite you to pluck and eat? Madame de Saverne had a lively little waiting-maid, whose bright eyes loved to look into neighbours' parks and gardens, and who had found favour with one of the domestics of the Prince Archbishop. This woman brought news to her mistress of the feasts, balls, banquets, nay, comedies, which were performed at the Prince Cardinal's. The Prince's gentlemen went hunting in his uniform. He was served on plate, and a lacquey in his livery stood behind each guest. He had the French comedians over from Strasbourg. Oh! that Monsieur de Molière was a droll gentleman; and how grand the "Cid" was!

Now, to see these plays and balls, Martha, the maid, must have had intelligence in and out of both the houses of Saverne. She must have deceived those old dragons, Mesdemoiselles. She must have had means of creeping out at the gate, and silently creeping back again. She told her mistress everything she saw, acted the plays for her, and described the dresses of the ladies and gentlemen. Madame de Saverne was never tired of hearing her maid's stories. When Martha was going to a fête, Madame lent her some little ornament to

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wear, and yet when Pasteur Schnorr and Mesdemoiselles talked of the proceedings at Great Saverne, and as if the fires of Gomorrah were ready to swallow up that palace, and all within it, the Lady of Saverne sat demurely in silence, and listened to their croaking and sermons. Listened? The pastor exhorted the household, the old ladies talked night after night, and poor Madame de Saverne never heeded. Her thoughts were away in Great Saverne; her spirit was for ever hankering about those woods. Letters came now and again from Monsieur de Saverne, with the army. They had been engaged with the enemy. Very good. He was unhurt. Heaven be praised! And then the grim husband read his poor little wife a grim sermon; and the grim sisters and the chaplain commented on it. Once, after an action at Calvi, Monsieur de Saverne, who was always specially lively in moments of danger, described how narrowly he had escaped with his life, and the chaplain took advantage of the circumstance, and delivered to the household a prodigious discourse on death, on danger, on preservation here and hereafter, and alas, and alas! poor Madame de Saverne found that she had not listened to a word of the homily. Her thoughts were not with the preacher, nor with the captain of Viomesnil's regiment before Calvi; they were in the palace at Great Saverne, with the balls, and the comedies, and the music, and the fine gentlemen from Paris and Strasbourg, and out of the Empire beyond the Rhine, who frequented the Prince's entertainments.

What happened where the wicked spirit was whispering "Eat," and the tempting apple hung within reach? One night when the household was at rest, Madame de Saverne, muffled in cloak and calash, with a female companion similarly disguised, tripped silently out of the back gate of the Hôtel de Saverne, found a carriole in waiting, with a driver who apparently knew the road and the passengers he was to carry, and after half-an-hour's drive through the straight avenues of the park of Great Saverne, alighted at the gates of the château, where the driver gave up the reins of the carriole to a domestic in waiting, and, by doors and passages which seemed perfectly well known to him, the coachman and the

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two women entered the castle together and found their way to a gallery in a great hall, in which many lords and ladies were seated, and at the end of which was a stage, with a curtain before it. Men and women came backwards and forwards on this stage, and recited dialogue in verses. O mercy! it was a comedy they were acting, one of those wicked delightful plays which she was forbidden to see, and which she was longing to behold! After the comedy was to be a ball, in which the actors would dance in their stage habits. Some of the people were in masks already, and in that box near to the stage, surrounded by a little crowd of dominoes, sate Monseigneur the Prince Cardinal himself. Madame de Saverne had seen him and his cavalcade sometimes returning from hunting. She would have been as much puzzled to say what the play was about as to give an account of Pasteur Schnorr's sermon a few hours before. But Frontin made jokes with his master Damis; and Géronte locked up the doors of his house, and went to bed grumbling; and it grew quite dark, and Mathurine flung a rope-ladder out of window, and she and her mistress Elmire came down the ladder; and Frontin held it, and Elmire, with a little cry, fell into the arms of Monsieur Damis; and master and man, and maid and mistress, sang a merry chorus together, in which human frailty was very cheerfully depicted; and when they had done, away they went to the gondola which was in waiting at the canal stairs, and so good-night. And when old Géronte, wakened up by the disturbance, at last came forth in his nightcap, and saw the boat paddling away out of reach, you may be sure that the audience laughed at the poor impotent raging old wretch. It was a very merry play indeed, and is still popular and performed in France and elsewhere.

After the play came a ball. Would Madame dance? Would the noble Countess of Saverne dance with a coachman? There were others below on the dancing-floor dressed in mask and domino as she was. Who ever said she had a mask and domino? You see it has been stated that she was muffled in cloak and calash. Well, is not a domino a cloak? and has it not a hood or calash appended to it? and, pray, do not women wear masks at home as well as at the Ridotto?

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Another question arises here. A high-born lady entrusts herself to a charioteer, who drives her to the castle of a prince her husband's enemy. Who was her companion? Of course he could be no other than that luckless Monsieur de la Motte. He had never been very far away from Madame de Saverne since her husband's departure. In spite of chaplains, and duennas, and guards, and locks and keys, he had found means of communicating with her. How? By what lies and stratagems? By what arts and bribery? These poor people are both gone to their account. Both suffered a fearful punishment. I will not describe their follies, and don't care to be Monsieur Figaro, and hold the ladder and lantern, while the Count scales Rosina's window. Poor frightened erring soul! She suffered an awful penalty for what, no doubt, was a great wrong.

A child almost, she was married to Monsieur de Saverne, without knowing him, without liking him, because her parents ordered her, and because she was bound to comply with their will. She was sold, and went to her slavery. She lived at first obediently enough. If she shed tears, they were dried; if she quarrelled with her husband, the two were presently reconciled. She bore no especial malice, and was as gentle, subordinate a slave as ever you shall see in Jamaica or Barbadoes. Nobody's tears were sooner dried, as I should judge: none would be more ready to kiss the hand of the overseer who drove her. But you don't expect sincerity and subservience too. I know, for my part, a lady who only obeys when she likes: and faith! it may be it is *I* who am the hypocrite, and have to tremble, and smile, and swindle before *her*.

When Madame de Saverne's time was nearly come, it was ordered that she should go to Strasbourg, where the best medical assistance is to be had: and here, six months after her husband's departure for Corsica, their child, Agnes de Saverne, was born.

Did secret terror and mental disquietude and remorse now fall on the unhappy lady? She wrote to my mother, at this time her only confidante (and yet not a confidante at all!)—"O Ursule! I dread this event. Perhaps I shall die. I think I hope I shall. In these long days since he has been away, I have got so to dread his return, that I believe I shall go mad

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when I see him. Do you know, after the battle before Calvi, when I read that many officers had been killed, I thought, is Monsieur de Saverne killed? And I read the list down, and his name was not there: and, my sister, my sister, I was not glad! Have I come to be such a monster as to wish my own husband——No. I wish I was. I can't speak to Monsieur Schnorr about this. He is so stupid. He doesn't understand me. He is like my husband, for ever preaching me his sermons.

"Listen, Ursule! Speak it to nobody! I have been to hear a sermon. Oh, it was indeed divine! It was not from one of our pastors. Oh, how they weary me! It was from a good bishop of the *French* Church—not our *German* Church—the Bishop of Amiens—who happens to be here on a visit to the Cardinal Prince. The bishop's name is *Monsieur de la Motte*. He is a relative of a gentleman of whom we have seen a great deal lately—of a great friend of Monsieur de Saverne, *who saved my husband's life* in the battle M. de S. is always talking about.

"How beautiful the cathedral is! It was night when I went. The church was lighted like the stars, and the music was like *Heaven*. Ah, how different from Monsieur Schnorr at home, from—from somebody *else* at my new home who is *always* preaching—that is, when he is at home! Poor man! I wonder whether he preaches to them in Corsica! I pity them if he does. Don't mention the cathedral if you write to me. The dragons don't know anything about it. How they would scold if they did! Oh, how they ennuyent me, the dragons! Behold them! They think I am writing to my husband. Ah, Ursule! When I write to him, I sit for hours before the paper. I say nothing; and what I say seems to be lies. Whereas when I write to you, my pen runs—runs! The paper is covered before I think I have begun. So it is when I write to—— I do believe that *vilain dragon* is peering at my note with her spectacles! Yes, my good sister, I am writing to Monsieur le Comte!"

To this letter a postscript is added, as by the Countess's command, in the German language, in which Madame de Saverne's medical attendant announces the birth of a daughter, and that the child and mother are doing well.

That daughter is sitting before me now—with spectacles

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on nose too—very placidly spelling the Portsmouth paper, where I hope she will soon read the promotion of Monsieur Scapegrace, her son. She has exchanged her noble name for mine, which is only humble and honest. My dear! your eyes are not so bright as once I remember them, and the raven locks are streaked with silver. To shield thy head from dangers has been the blessed chance and duty of my life. When I turn towards her, and see her moored in our harbour of rest, after our life's chequered voyage, calm and happy, a sense of immense gratitude fills my being, and my heart says a hymn of praise.

The first days of the life of Agnes de Saverne were marked by incidents which were strangely to influence her career. Around her little cradle a double, a triple tragedy was about to be enacted. Strange that death, crime, revenge, remorse, mystery, should attend round the cradle of one so innocent and pure—as pure and innocent, I pray Heaven now, as upon that day when, at scarce a month old, the adventures of her life began.

That letter to my mother, written by Madame de Saverne on the eve of her child's birth, and finished by her attendant, bears date November 25, 1768. A month later Martha Seebach, her attendant, wrote (in German) that her mistress had suffered frightfully from fever; so much so that her reason left her for some time, and her life was despaired of. Mesdemoiselles de Barr were for bringing up the child by hand; but not being versed in nursery practices, the infant had ailed sadly until restored to its mother. Madame de Saverne was now tranquil. Madame was greatly better. She had suffered most fearfully. In her illness she was constantly calling for her foster-sister to protect her from some danger which, as she appeared to fancy, menaced Madame.

Child as I was at the time when these letters were passing, I remember the arrival of the next. It lies in yonder drawer, and was written by a poor fevered hand which is now cold, in ink which is faded after fifty years.* I remember my mother

* The memoirs appear to have been written in the years '20, '21. Mr. Duval was gazetted Rear-Admiral and K.C.B. in the promotions on the accession of King George IV.

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screaming out in German, which she always spoke when strongly moved, "Dear Heaven, my child is mad—is mad!" And indeed that poor faded letter contains a strange rhapsody.

"Ursule!" she wrote (I do not care to give at length the words of the poor wandering creature), "after my child was born the demons wanted to take her from me. But I struggled and kept her quite close, and now they can no longer hurt her. I took her to church. Martha went with me, and He was there—he always is—to defend me from the demons, and I had her christened Agnes, and I was christened Agnes too. Think of my being christened at twenty-two! Agnes the First, and Agnes the Second. But though my name is changed, I am always the same to my Ursule, and my name now is, Agnes Clarisse de Saverne, born de Viomesnil."

She had actually, when not quite mistress of her own reason, been baptised into the Roman Catholic Church with her child. Was she sane when she so acted? Had she thought of the step before taking it? Had she known Catholic clergymen at Saverne, or had she other reasons for her conversion than those which were furnished in the conversations which took place between her husband and Monsieur de la Motte? In this letter the poor lady says, "Yesterday two persons came to my bed with gold crowns round their heads. One was dressed like a priest; one was beautiful and covered with arrows; and they said, 'We are Saint Fabian and Saint Sebastian; and to-morrow is the day of Saint Agnes: and she will be at church to receive you there.'"

What the real case was I never knew. The Protestant clergyman whom I saw in after days could only bring his book to show that he had christened the infant, not Agnes, but Augustine. Martha Seebach is dead. La Motte, when I conversed with him, did not touch upon this part of the poor lady's history. I conjecture that the images and pictures which she had seen in the churches operated upon her fevered brain; that, having procured a Roman Calendar and Missal, she knew saints' days and feasts; and, not yet recovered from her delirium or quite responsible for the actions which she performed, she took her child to the cathedral, and was baptised there.

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And now, no doubt, the poor lady had to practise more deceit and concealment. The "demons" were the old maiden sisters left to watch over her. She had to hoodwink these. Had she not done so before—when she went to the Cardinal's palace at Saverne? Wherever the poor thing moved I fancy those ill-omened eyes of La Motte glimmering upon her out of the darkness. Poor Eve—not lost quite, I pray and think,—but that serpent was ever trailing after her, and she was to die poisoned in its coil. Who shall understand the awful ways of Fate? A year after that period regarding which I write, a lovely Imperial Princess rode through the Strasbourg streets radiant and blushing, amidst pealing bells, roaring cannons, garlands and banners, and shouting multitudes. Did anyone ever think that the last stage of that life's journey was to be taken in a hideous tumbrel, and to terminate on the scaffold? The life of Madame de Saverne was to last but a year more, and her end to be scarcely less tragical.

Many physicians have told me how often after the birth of a child the brain of a mother will be affected. Madame de Saverne remained for some time in this febrile condition, if not unconscious of her actions, at least not accountable for all of them. At the end of three months she woke up as out of a dream, having a dreadful recollection of the circumstances which had passed. Under what hallucinations we never shall know, or yielding to what persuasions, the wife of a stern Protestant nobleman had been to a Roman Catholic church, and had been christened there with her child. She never could recall that step. A great terror came over her as she thought of it—a great terror and a hatred of her husband, the cause of all her grief and her fear. She began to look out lest he should return; she clutched her child to her breast, and barred and bolted all doors for fear people should rob her of the infant. The Protestant chaplain, the Protestant sisters-in-law, looked on with dismay and anxiety; they thought justly that Madame de Saverne was not yet quite restored to her reason; they consulted the physicians, who agreed with them; who arrived, who prescribed; who were treated by the patient with scorn, laughter, insult sometimes; sometimes with tears and terror, according to her wayward mood. Her condition was most

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puzzling. The sisters wrote from time to time guarded reports respecting her to her husband in Corsica. He, for his part, replied instantly with volumes of his wonted verbose commonplace. He acquiesced in the decrees of Fate, when informed that a daughter was born to him; and presently wrote whole reams of instructions regarding her nurture, dress, and physical and religious training. The child was called Agnes? He would have preferred Barbara, as being his mother's name. I remember in some of the poor gentleman's letters there were orders about the child's pap, and instructions as to the nurse's diet. He was coming home soon. The Corsicans had been defeated in every action. Had he been a Catholic he would have been a knight of the King's orders long ere this. Monsieur de Viomesnil hoped still to get for him the order of Military Merit (the Protestant order which His Majesty had founded ten years previously). These letters (which were subsequently lost by an accident at sea*) spoke modestly enough of the Count's personal adventures. I hold him to have been a very brave man, and only not tedious and prolix when he spoke of his own merits and services.

The Count's letters succeeded each other post after post. The end of the war was approaching, and with it his return was assured. He exulted in the thought of seeing his child, and leading her in the way she should go—the right way, the true way. As the mother's brain cleared, her terror grew greater—her terror and loathing of her husband. She could not bear the thought of his return, or to face him with the confession which she knew she must make. His wife turn Catholic and baptise his child? She felt he would kill her, did he know what had happened. She went to the priest who had baptised her. Monsieur Georgel (his Eminence's secretary) knew her husband. The Prince Cardinal was so great and powerful a prelate, Georgel said, that he would protect her against all the wrath of all the Protestants in France. I think she must have had interviews with the Prince Cardinal, though there is no account of them in any letter to my mother.

* The letters from *Madame de Saverne* to my mother at Winchelsea were not subject to this mishap, but were always kept by Madame Duval in her own escritoire.

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The campaign was at an end. Monsieur de Vaux, Monsieur de Viomesnil, both wrote in highly eulogistic terms of the conduct of the Count de Saverne. Their good wishes would attend him home; Protestant as he was, their best interest should be exerted in his behalf.

The day of the Count's return approached. The day arrived: I can fancy the brave gentleman with beating heart ascending the steps of the homely lodging where his family have been living at Strasbourg ever since the infant's birth. How he has dreamt about that child: prayed for her and his wife at night-watch and bivouac—prayed for them as he stood, calm and devout, in the midst of battle. . . .

When he enters the room, he sees only two frightened domestics and the two ghastly faces of his scared old sisters.

"Where are Clarisse and the child?" he asks.

The child and the mother were gone. The aunts knew not where.

A stroke of palsy could scarcely have smitten the unhappy gentleman more severely than did the news which his trembling family was obliged to give him. In later days I saw Monsieur Schnorr, the German pastor from Kehl, who has been mentioned already, and who was installed in the Count's house as tutor and chaplain during the absence of the master. "When Madame de Saverne went to make her *coucher* at Strasbourg" (Monsieur Schnorr said to me), "I retired to my duties at Kehl, glad enough to return to the quiet of my home, for the noble lady's reception of me was anything but gracious; and I had to endure much female sarcasm and many unkind words from Madame la Comtesse, whenever, as in duty bound, I presented myself at her table. Sir, that most unhappy lady used to make sport of me before her domestics. She used to call me her gaoler. She used to mimic my ways of eating and drinking. She would yawn in the midst of my exhortations, and cry out 'O que c'est bête!' and when I gave out a psalm, would utter little cries, and say, 'Pardon me, Monsieur Schnorr, but you sing so out of tune you make my head ache;' so that I could scarcely continue that portion of the service, the very domestics laughing at me when I began to sing. My life was a martyrdom, but I bore my tortures

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meekly, out of a sense of duty and my love for Monsieur le Comte. When her Ladyship kept her chamber I used to wait almost daily upon Mesdemoiselles the Count's sisters, to ask news of her and her child. I christened the infant; but her mother was too ill to be present, and sent me out word by Mademoiselle Marthe that *she* should call the child Agnes, though I might name it what I pleased. This was on the 21st January, and I remember being struck, because in the Roman Calendar the feast of Saint Agnes is celebrated on that day.

"Haggard and actually grown grey, from a black man which he was, my poor lord came to me with wildness and agony of grief in all his features and actions, to announce to me that Madame the Countess had fled, taking her infant with her. And he had a scrap of paper with him, over which he wept and raged as one demented; now pouring out fiercer imprecations, now bursting into passionate tears and cries, calling upon his wife, his darling, his prodigal to come back, to bring him his child, when all should be forgiven. As he thus spoke his screams and groans were so piteous, that I myself was quite unmanned, and my mother, who keeps house for me (and who happened to be listening at the door), was likewise greatly alarmed by my poor lord's passion of grief. And when I read on that paper that my Lady Countess had left the faith to which our fathers gloriously testified in the midst of trouble, slaughter, persecution, and bondage, I was scarcely less shocked than my good lord himself.

"We crossed the bridge to Strasbourg back again and went to the Cathedral Church, and entering there, we saw the Abbé Georgel coming out of a chapel where he had been to perform his devotions. The Abbé, who knew me, gave a ghastly smile as he recognised me, and for a pale man his cheek blushed up a little when I said, 'This is Monsieur the Comte de Saverne.'

"'Where is she?' asked my poor lord, clutching the Abbé's arm.

"'Who?' asked the Abbé, stepping back a little.

"'Where is my child? where is my wife?' cries the Count.

"'Silence, Monsieur!' says the Abbé. 'Do you know in whose house you are?' and the chant from the altar, where

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the service was being performed, came upon us, and smote my poor lord as though a shot had struck him. We were standing, he tottering against a pillar in the nave, close by the christening font, and over my Lord's head was a picture of Saint Agnes.

"The agony of the poor gentleman could not but touch anyone who witnessed it. 'Monsieur le Comte,' says the Abbé, 'I feel for you. This great surprise has come upon you unprepared—I—I pray that it may be for your good.'

"'You know, then, what has happened?' asked Monsieur de Saverne; and the Abbé was obliged to stammer a confession that he *did* know what had occurred. He was, in fact, the very man who had performed the rite which separated my unhappy lady from the Church of her fathers.

"'Sir,' he said, with some spirit, 'this was a service which no clergyman could refuse. I would to Heaven, Monsieur, that you, too, might be brought to ask it from me.'

"The poor Count, with despair in his face, asked to see the register which confirmed the news, and there we saw that, on the 21st January, 1769, being the Feast of Saint Agnes, the noble lady, Clarisse, Countess of Saverne, born De Viomesnil, aged twenty-two years, and Agnes, only daughter of the same Count of Saverne and Clarisse his wife, were baptised and received into the Church in the presence of two witnesses (clerics) whose names were signed.

"The poor Count knelt over the registry-book with an awful grief in his face, and in a mood which I heartily pitied. He bent down uttering what seemed an imprecation rather than a prayer, and at this moment it chanced the service at the chief altar was concluded, and Monseigneur and his suite of clergy came into the sacristy. Sir, the Count de Saverne, starting up, clutching his sword in his hand, and shaking his fist at the Cardinal, uttered a wild speech calling down imprecations upon the Church of which the Prince was a chief: 'Where is my lamb that you have taken from me?' he said, using the language of the Prophet towards the King who had despoiled him.

"The Cardinal haughtily said the conversion of Madame de Saverne was of Heaven, and no act of his, and adding,

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'Bad neighbour as you have been to me, sir, I wish you so well that I hope you may follow her.'

"At this the Count, losing all patience, made a violent attack upon the Church of Rome, denounced the Cardinal, and called down maledictions upon his head; said that a day would come when his abominable pride should meet with a punishment and fall; and spoke as, in fact, the poor gentleman was able to do only too readily and volubly, against Rome and all its errors.

"The Prince Louis de Rohan replied with no little dignity, as I own. He said that such words in such a place were offensive and out of all reason; that it only depended on him to have Monsieur de Saverne arrested and punished for blasphemy and insult to the Church: but that, pitying the Count's unhappy condition, the Cardinal would forget the hasty and insolent words he had uttered—as he would know how to defend Madame de Saverne and her child after the righteous step which she had taken. And he swept out of the sacristy with his suite, and passed through the door which leads into his palace, leaving my poor Count still in his despair and fury.

"As he spoke, with those Scripture phrases which Monsieur de Saverne ever had at command, I remember how the Prince Cardinal tossed up his head and smiled. I wonder whether he thought of the words when his own day of disgrace came, and the fatal affair of the diamond necklace which brought him to ruin." *

"Not without difficulty" (Monsieur Schnorr resumed) "I induced the poor Count to quit the church where his wife's apostasy had been performed. The outer gates and walls are decorated with numberless sculptures of saints of the Roman Calendar: and for a minute or two the poor man stood on the threshold shouting imprecations in the sunshine, and calling down woe upon France and Rome. I hurried him away. Such language was dangerous, and could bring no

* My informant, Protestant though he was, did not, as I remember, speak with very much asperity against the Prince Cardinal. He said that the Prince lived an edifying life after his fall, succouring the poor, and doing everything in his power to defend the cause of royalty.—D. D.

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good to either of us. He was almost a madman, when I conducted him back to his home, where the ladies his sisters, scared with his wild looks, besought me not to leave him.

"Again he went into the room which his wife and child had inhabited, and, as he looked at the relics of both which still were left there, gave way to bursts of grief which were pitiable indeed to witness. I speak of what happened near forty years ago, and remember the scene as though yesterday: the passionate agony of the poor gentleman, the sobs and prayers. On a chest of drawers there was a little cap belonging to the infant. He seized it: kissed it: wept over it: calling upon the mother to bring the child back and he would forgive all. He thrust the little cap into his breast: opened every drawer, book, and closet, seeking for some indications of the fugitives. My opinion was, and that even of the ladies, sisters of Monsieur le Comte, that Madame had taken refuge in a convent with the child; that the Cardinal knew where she was, poor and friendless; and that the Protestant gentleman would in vain seek for her. Perhaps when tired of that place—I for my part thought Madame la Comtesse a light-minded wilful person, who certainly had no *vocation*, as the Catholics call it, for a religious life—I thought she might come out after a while, and gave my patron such consolation as I could devise, upon this faint hope. He who was all forgiveness at one minute, was all wrath the next. He would rather see his child dead than receive her as a Catholic. He would go to the King, surrounded by harlots as he was, and ask for justice. There were still Protestant gentlemen left in France whose spirit was not altogether trodden down, and they would back him in demanding reparation for this outrage.

"I had some vague suspicion, which, however, I dismissed from my mind as unworthy, that there might be a third party cognisant of Madame's flight; and this was a gentleman, once a great favourite of Monsieur le Comte, and in whom I myself was not a little interested. Three or four days after the Comte de Saverne went away to the war, as I was meditating on a sermon which I proposed to deliver, walking at the back of my Lord's house of Saverne, in the fields which skirt the wood

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where the Prince Cardinal's great Schloss stands, I saw this gentleman with a gun over his shoulder, and recognised him —the Chevalier de la Motte, the very person who had saved the life of Monsieur de Saverne in the campaign against the English.

"Monsieur de la Motte said he was staying with the Cardinal, and trusted that the ladies of Saverne were well. He sent his respectful compliments to them: in a laughing way said he had been denied the door when he came to a visit, which he thought was an unkind act towards an old comrade; and at the same time expressed his sorrow at the Count's departure —'for, Herr Pfarrer,' said he, 'you know I am a good Catholic, and in many most important conversations which I had with the Comte de Saverne, the differences between our two Churches was the subject of our talk, and I do think I should have converted him to ours.' I, humble village pastor as I am, was not afraid to speak in such a cause, and we straightway had a most interesting conversation together, in which, as the gentleman showed, I had not the worst of the argument. It appeared he had been educated for the Roman Church, but afterwards entered the army. He was a most interesting man, and his name was Le Chevalier de la Motte. You look as if you had known him, Monsieur le Capitaine—will it please you to replenish your pipe, and take another glass of my beer?"

I said I had *effectivement* known Monsieur de la Motte; and the good old clergyman (with many compliments to me for speaking French and German so glibly) proceeded with his artless narrative: "I was ever a poor horseman: and when I came to be chaplain and major-domo at the Hôtel de Saverne, in the Count's absence, Madame more than once rode entirely away from me, saying that she could not afford to go at my clerical jog-trot. And being in a scarlet amazon, and a conspicuous object, you see, I thought I saw her at a distance talking to a gentleman on a schimmel horse, in a grass-green coat. When I asked her to whom she spoke, she said, 'Monsieur le Pasteur, you radotez with your grey horse and your green coat! If you are set to be a spy over me, ride faster, or bring out the old ladies to bark at your side.' The fact is, the Countess was for ever quarrelling with those old ladies, and

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they were a yelping ill-natured pair. They treated me, a pastor of the Reformed Church of the Augsburg Confession, as no better than a lacquey, sir, and made me eat the bread of humiliation; whereas Madame la Comtesse, though often haughty, flighty, and passionate, could also be so winning and gentle, that no one could resist her. Ah, sir!" said the pastor, "that woman had a coaxing way with her when she chose, and when her flight came I was in such a way that the jealous old sisters-in-law said I was in love with her myself. Pfui! For a month before my Lord's arrival I had been knocking at all doors to see if I could find my poor wandering lady behind them. She, her child, and Martha her maid, were gone, and we knew not whither.

"On that very first day of his unhappy arrival, Monsieur le Comte discovered what his sisters, jealous and curious as they were, what I, a man of no inconsiderable acumen, had failed to note. Amongst torn papers and chiffons, in her Ladyship's bureau, there was a scrap with one line in her handwriting—'Ursule, Ursule, le tyran rev——' and no more.

"'Ah!' Monsieur le Comte said, 'she is gone to her foster-sister in England! Quick, quick, horses!' And before two hours were passed he was on horseback, making the first stage of that long journey.

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CHAPTER III.

THE TRAVELLERS.

THE poor gentleman was in such haste that the old proverb was realised in his case, and his journey was anything but speedy. At Nanci he fell ill of a fever, which had nearly carried him off, and in which he unceasingly raved about his child, and called upon his faithless wife to return her. Almost before he was convalescent, he was on his way again, to Boulogne, where he saw that English coast on which he rightly conjectured his fugitive wife was sheltered.

And here, from my boyish remembrance, which, respecting these early days, remains extraordinarily clear, I can take up the story, in which I was myself a very young actor, playing in the strange, fantastic, often terrible, drama which ensued a not insignificant part. As I survey it now, the curtain is down, and the play long over; as I think of its surprises, disguises, mysteries, escapes, and dangers, I am amazed myself, and sometimes inclined to be almost as great a fatalist as Monsieur de la Motte, who vowed that a superior Power ruled our actions for us, and declared that he could no more

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prevent his destiny from accomplishing itself, than he could prevent his hair from growing. What a destiny it was! What a fatal tragedy was now about to begin!

One evening in our Midsummer holidays, in the year 1769, I remember being seated in my little chair at home, with a tempest of rain beating down the street. We had customers on most evenings, but there happened to be none on this night; and I remember I was puzzling over a bit of Latin grammar, to which Mother used to keep me stoutly when I came home from school.

It is fifty years since.* I have forgotten who knows how many events of my life, which are not much worth the remembering; but I have as clearly before my eyes now a little scene which occurred on this momentous night, as though it had been acted within this hour. As we are sitting at our various employments, we hear steps coming up the street, which was empty, and silent but for the noise of the wind and rain. We hear steps—several steps—along the pavement, and they stop at our door.

"Madame Duval! It is Gregson!" cries a voice from without.

"Ah, bon Dieu!" says Mother, starting up and turning quite white.

And then I heard the cry of an infant. Dear heart! How well I remember that little cry!

As the door opens, a great gust of wind sets our two candles flickering, and I see enter—

A gentleman giving his arm to a lady who is veiled in cloaks and wraps, an attendant carrying a crying child, and Gregson the boatman after them.

My mother gives a great hoarse shriek, and crying out, "Clarisse! Clarisse!" rushes up to the lady, and hugs and embraces her passionately. The child cries and wails. The nurse strives to soothe the infant. The gentleman takes off his hat and wrings the wet from it, and looks at me. It was then I felt a strange shock and terror. I have felt the same shock once or twice in my life; and once notably, the

* The narrative seems to have been written about the year 1820.

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person so affecting me has been my enemy, and has come to a dismal end.

"We have had a very rough voyage," says the gentleman (in French) to my grandfather. "We have been fourteen hours at sea. Madame has suffered greatly, and is much exhausted."

"Thy rooms are ready," says Mother, fondly. "My poor Biche, thou shalt sleep in comfort to-night, and need fear nothing, nothing!"

A few days before I had seen Mother and her servant mightily busy in preparing the rooms on the first floor, and decorating them. When I asked whom she was expecting, she boxed my ears, and bade me be quiet; but these were evidently the expected visitors; and, of course, from the names which Mother used, I knew that the lady was the Countess of Saverne.

"And this is thy son, Ursule?" says the lady. "He is a great boy! My little wretch is always crying."

"Oh, the little darling!" says Mother, seizing the child, which fell to crying louder than ever, "scared by the nodding plume and bristling crest" of Madame Duval, who wore a great cap in those days, and indeed looked as fierce as any Hector.

When the pale lady spoke so harshly about the child, I remember myself feeling a sort of surprise and displeasure. Indeed, I have loved children all my life, and am a fool about them (as witness my treatment of my own rascal), and no one can say that I was ever a tyrant at school, or ever fought there except to hold my own.

My mother produced what food was in the house, and welcomed her guests to her humble table. What trivial things remain impressed on the memory! I remember laughing in my boyish way because the lady said, "Ah! c'est ça du thé? je n'en ai jamais goûté. Mais c'est très mauvais, n'est-ce pas, Monsieur le Chevalier?" I suppose they had not learned to drink tea in Alsace yet. Mother stopped my laughing with her usual appeal to my ears. I was daily receiving that sort of correction from the good soul. Grandfather said, if Madame the Countess would like a little tasse of real Nantes

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brandy after her voyage, he could supply her, but she would have none of that either, and retired soon to her chamber, which had been prepared for her with my mother's best sheets and diapers, and in which was a bed for her maid Martha, who had retired to it with the little crying child. For Monsieur le Chevalier de la Motte an apartment was taken at Mr. Billis's the baker's, down the street:—a friend who gave me many a plum-cake in my childhood, and whose wigs Grandfather dressed, if you must know the truth.

At morning and evening we used to have prayers, which Grandfather spoke with much eloquence; but on this night, as he took out his great Bible, and was for having me read a chapter, my mother said, "No. This poor Clarisse is fatigued, and will go to bed." And to bed accordingly the stranger went. And as I read my little chapter, I remember how tears fell down Mother's cheeks, and how she cried, "Ah, mon Dieu, mon Dieu! ayez pitié d'elle," and when I was going to sing our evening hymn, "Nun ruhen alle Wälder," she told me to hush. Madame upstairs was tired, and wanted to sleep. And she went upstairs to look after Madame, and bade me be a little guide to the strange gentleman, and show him the way to Billis's house. Off I went, prattling by his side; I dare say I soon forgot the terror which I felt when I first saw him. You may be sure all Winchelsea knew that a French lady, and her child, and her maid, were come to stay with Madame Duval, and a French gentleman to lodge over the baker's.

I never shall forget my terror and astonishment when Mother told me that this lady who came to us was a Papist. There were two gentlemen of that religion living in our town, at a handsome house called the Priory; but they had little to do with persons in my parents' humble walk of life, though of course my mother would dress Mrs. Weston's head as well as any other lady's. I forgot also to say that Mrs. Duval went out sometimes as ladies' nurse, and in that capacity had attended Mrs. Weston, who, however, lost her child. The Westons had a chapel in their house, in the old grounds of the Priory, and clergymen of their persuasion used to come over from my Lord Newburgh's of Slindon, or from Arundel, where there is another great Papist house; and one or two

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Roman Catholics—there were very few of them in our town —were buried in a part of the old gardens of the Priory, where a monks' burying-place had been before Harry VIII.'s time.

The new gentleman was the first Papist to whom I had ever spoken; and as I trotted about the town with him, showing him the old gates, the church, and so forth, I remember saying to him, "And have you burned any Protestants?"

"Oh, yes!" says he, giving a horrible grin, "I have roasted several, and eaten them afterwards." And I shrank back from him, and his pale grinning face; feeling once more that terror which had come over me when I first beheld him. He was a queer gentleman; he was amused by my simplicity and odd sayings. He was never tired of having me with him. He said I should be his little English master; and indeed he learned the language surprisingly quick, whereas poor Madame de Saverne never understood a word of it.

She was very ill—pale, with a red spot on either cheek, sitting for whole hours in silence, and looking round frightened, as if a prey to some terror. I have seen my mother watching her, and looking almost as scared as the Countess herself. At times, Madame could not bear the crying of the child, and would order it away from her. At other times, she would clutch it, cover it with cloaks, and lock her door, and herself into the chamber with her infant. She used to walk about the house of a night. I had a little room near Mother's, which I occupied during the holidays, and on Saturdays and Sundays, when I came over from Rye. I remember quite well waking up one night and hearing Madame's voice at Mother's door, crying out, "Ursula, Ursula! quick! horses! I must go away. He is coming; I know he is coming!" And then there were remonstrances on Mother's part, and Madame's maid came out of her room, with entreaties to her mistress to return. At the cry of the child the poor mother would rush away from whatever place she was in, and hurry to the infant. Not that she loved it. At the next moment she would cast the child down on the bed, and go to the window again, and look to the sea. For hours she sat at that window, with a curtain twisted round her, as if hiding from someone. Ah! how

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have I looked up at that window since, and the light twinkling here! I wonder does the house remain yet? I don't like now to think of the passionate grief I have passed through, as I looked up to yon glimmering lattice.

It was evident our poor visitor was in a deplorable condition. The apothecary used to come and shake his head, and order medicine. The medicine did little good. The sleeplessness continued. She was a prey to constant fever. She would make incoherent answers to questions put to her, laugh and weep at odd times and places; push her meals away from her, though they were the best my poor mother could supply; order my grandfather to go and sit in the kitchen, and not have the impudence to sit down before her; coax and scold my mother by turns, and take her up very sharply when she rebuked me. Poor Madame Duval was scared by her foster-sister. She, who ruled everybody, became humble before the poor crazy lady. I can see them both now: the lady in white, listless and silent as she would sit for hours taking notice of no one, and Mother watching her with terrified dark eyes.

The Chevalier de la Motte had his lodgings, and came and went between his house and ours. I thought he was the lady's cousin. He used to call himself her cousin: I did not know what our pastor Monsieur Borel meant when he came to Mother one day, and said, "*Fi, donc*, what a pretty business thou hast commenced, Madame Denis—thou, an elder's daughter of our Church!"

"What business?" says Mother.

"That of harbouring crime and sheltering iniquity," says he, naming the crime, viz. No. 7 of the Decalogue.

Being a child, I did not then understand the word he used. But as soon as he had spoken, Mother, taking up a saucepan of soup, cries out, "Get out of there, Monsieur, all pastor as you are, or I will send this soup at thy ugly head, and the saucepan afterwards." And she looked so fierce, that I am not surprised the little man trotted off.

Shortly afterwards Grandfather comes home, looking almost as frightened as his *commanding officer*, Monsieur Borel. Grandfather expostulated with his daughter-in-law. He was

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in a great agitation. He wondered how she could speak so to the pastor of the church. "All the town," says he, "is talking about you and this unhappy lady."

"All the town is an old woman," replies Madame Duval, stamping her foot, and *twisting her moustache*, I might say, almost. "What? These white-beaks of French cry out because I receive my foster-sister? What? It is wrong to shelter a poor foolish dying woman? Oh, the cowards, the cowards! Listen, petit-papa: if you hear a word said at the club against your *bru*, and do not knock the man down, I will." And, faith, I think Grandfather's *bru* would have kept her word.

I fear my own unlucky simplicity brought part of the opprobrium down upon my poor mother, which she had now to suffer in our French colony; for one day a neighbour, Madame Crochu by name, stepping in and asking, "How is your boarder, and how is her cousin the Count?"—

"Madame Clarisse is no better than before," said I (shaking my head wisely), "and the gentleman is not a count, and he is not her cousin, Madame Crochu!"

"Oh, he is no relation?" says the mantua-maker. And that story was quickly told over the little town, and when we went to church next Sunday, Monsieur Borel preached a sermon which made all the congregation look to us, and poor Mother sat boiling red like a lobster fresh out of the pot. I did not quite know what I had done: I know what Mother was giving me for my pains, when our poor patient, entering the room, hearing, I suppose, the hissing of the stick (and never word from me—I used to bite a bullet, and hold my tongue), rushed into the room, whisked the cane out of Mother's hand, flung her to the other end of the room with a strength quite surprising, and clasped me up in her arms and began pacing up and down the room, and glaring at Mother. "Strike your own child, monster, monster!" says the poor lady. "Kneel down and ask pardon: or, as sure as I am the queen, I will order your head off!"

At dinner, she ordered me to come and sit by her. "Bishop!" she said to Grandfather, "my lady of honour has been naughty. She whipped the little prince with a scorpion.

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I took it from her hand. Duke! if she does it again, there is a sword: I desire you to cut the Countess's head off!" And then she took a carving-knife and waved it, and gave one of her laughs, which always set poor Mother a-crying. She used to call us dukes and princes—I don't know what—poor soul! It was the Chevalier de la Motte whom she generally styled duke, holding out her hand, and saying, "Kneel, sir, kneel, and kiss our Royal hand." And Monsieur de la Motte would kneel with a sad sad face, and go through this hapless ceremony. As for Grandfather, who was very bald, and without his wig, being one evening below her window culling a salad in his garden, she beckoned him to her smiling, and when the poor old man came, she upset a dish of tea over his bald pate and said, "I appoint you and anoint you Bishop of Saint Denis!"

The woman Martha, who had been the companion of the Countess de Saverne in her unfortunate flight from home—I believe that since the birth of her child the poor lady had never been in her right senses at all—broke down under the ceaseless watching and care her mistress's condition necessitated, and I have no doubt found her duties yet more painful and difficult when a second mistress, and a very harsh, imperious, and jealous one, was set over her in the person of worthy Madame Duval. My mother was for ordering everybody who would submit to her orders, and entirely managing the affairs of all those whom she loved. She put the mother to bed, and the baby in her cradle; she prepared food for both of them, dressed one and the other with an equal affection, and loved that unconscious mother and child with a passionate devotion. But she loved her own way, was jealous of all who came between her and the objects of her love, and no doubt led her subordinates an uncomfortable life.

Three months of Madame Duval tired out the Countess's Alsatian maid, Martha. She revolted and said she would go home. Mother said she was an ungrateful wretch, but was delighted to get rid of her. She always averred the woman stole articles of dress, and trinkets, and laces, belonging to her mistress, before she left us: and in an evil hour this wretched Martha went away. I believe she really loved her

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mistress, and would have loved the child, had my mother's rigid arms not pushed her from its cot. Poor little innocent, in what tragic gloom did thy life begin! But an unseen Power was guarding that helpless innocence: and sure a good angel watched it in its hour of danger!

So Madame Duval turned Martha out of her tent as Sarah thrust out Hagar. Are women pleased after doing these pretty tricks? Your ladyships know best. Madame D. not only thrust out Martha, but flung stones after Martha all her life. She went away, not blameless perhaps, but wounded to the quick with the ingratitude which had been shown to her, and a link in that mysterious chain of destiny which was binding *all* these people—me the boy of seven years old; yonder little speechless infant of as many months; that poor wandering lady bereft of reason; that dark inscrutable companion of hers who brought evil with him wherever he came.

From Dungeness to Boulogne is but six-and-thirty miles, and our boats, when war was over, were constantly making journeys there. Even in war-time the little harmless craft left each other alone, and, I suspect, carried on a great deal of peaceable and fraudulent trade together. Grandfather had share of a "fishing" boat with one Thomas Gregson of Lydd. When Martha was determined to go, one of our boats was ready to take her to the place from whence she came, or transfer her to a French boat, which would return into its own harbour.* She was carried back to Boulogne and landed. I know the day full well from a document now before me, of which the dismal writing and signing were occasioned by that very landing.

As she stepped out from the pier (a crowd of people, no doubt, tearing the poor wretch's slender luggage from her to carry it to the *Customs*) almost the first person on whom the woman's eyes fell was her master the Count de Saverne. He had actually only reached the place on that very day, and walked the pier, looking towards England, as many a man

* There were points for which our boats used to make, and meet the French boats when not disturbed, and do a good deal more business than I could then understand.—D. D.

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has done from the same spot, when he saw the servant of his own wife come up the side of the pier.

He rushed to her, as she started back screaming and almost fainting, but the crowd of beggars behind her prevented her retreat. "The child,—does the child live?" asked the poor Count, in the German tongue, which both spoke.

The child was well. Thank God, thank God! The poor father's heart was freed *that* terror, then! I can fancy the gentleman saying, "Your mistress is at Winchelsea, with her foster-sister?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Comte."

"The Chevalier de la Motte is always at Winchelsea?"

"Ye—oh, no, no, Monsieur le Comte!"

"Silence, liar! He made the journey with her. They stopped at the same inns. Monsieur le Brun, merchant, aged 34; his sister, Madame Dubois, aged 24, with a female infant in her arms, and a maid, left this port, on 20th April, in the English fishing-boat 'Mary,' of Rye. Before embarking they slept at the 'Ecu de France.' I knew I should find them."

"By all that is sacred, I never left Madame once during the voyage!"

"Never till to-day? Enough. How was the fishing-boat called which brought you to Boulogne?"

One of the boat's crew was actually walking behind the unhappy gentleman at the time, with some packet which Martha had left in it.* It seemed as if Fate was determined upon suddenly and swiftly bringing the criminal to justice, and under the avenging sword of the friend he had betrayed. He bade the man follow him to the hotel. There should be a good drink-money for him.

"Does he treat her well?" asked the poor gentleman, as he and the maid walked on.

"Dame! No mother can be more gentle than he is with her!" Where Martha erred was in not saying that her mistress was utterly deprived of reason, and had been so almost since the child's birth. She owned that she had

* I had this from the woman herself, whom we saw when we paid our visit to Lorraine and Alsace in 1814.

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attended her lady to the cathedral when the Countess and the infant were christened, and that Monsieur de la Motte was also present. "He has taken body and soul too," no doubt the miserable gentleman thought.

He happened to alight at the very hotel where the fugitives of whom he was in search had had their quarters four months before (so that for two months at least poor Monsieur de Saverne must have lain ill at Nanci at the commencement of his journey). The boatman, the luggage people, and Martha the servant followed the Count to this hotel; and the femme-de-chambre remembered how Madame Dubois and her brother had been at the hotel—a poor sick lady, who sat up talking the whole night. Her brother slept in the right wing across the court. Monsieur has the lady's room. How that child did cry! See, the windows look on the port. "Yes, this was the lady's room."

"And the child lay on which side?"

"On that side."

Monsieur de Saverne looked at the place which the woman pointed out, stooped his head towards the pillow, and cried as if his heart would break. The fisherman's tears rolled down too over his brown face and hands. *Le pauvre homme, le pauvre homme!*

"Come into my sitting-room with me," he said to the fisherman. The man followed him and shut the door.

His burst of feeling was now over. He became entirely calm.

"You know the house from which this woman came, at Winchelsea, in England?"

"Yes."

"You took a gentleman and a lady thither?"

"Yes."

"You remember the man?"

"Perfectly."

"For thirty louis will you go to sea to-night, take a passenger, and deliver a letter to Monsieur de la Motte?"

The man agreed: and I take out from my secretary that letter, in its tawny ink of fifty years' date, and read it with a strange interest always:—

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"To the Chevalier François Joseph de la Motte, at Winchelsea, in England.

"I KNEW I should find you. I never doubted where you were. But for a sharp illness which I made at Nanci, I should have been with you two months earlier. After what has occurred between us, I know this invitation will be to you as a command, and that you will hasten as you did to my rescue from the English bayonets at Hastenbeck. Between us, Monsieur le Chevalier, it is to life or death. I depend upon you to communicate this to no one, and to follow the messenger, who will bring you to me.

"COUNT DE SAVERNE."

This letter was brought to our house one evening as we sat in the front shop. I had the child on my knee, which would have no other playfellow but me. The Countess was pretty quiet that evening—the night calm, and the windows open. Grandfather was reading his book. The Countess and Monsieur de la Motte were at cards, though, poor thing, she could scarce play for ten minutes at a time; and there comes a knock, at which Grandfather puts down his book.*

"All's well," says he. "Entrez. Comment! c'est vous, Bidois?"

"Oui, c'est bien moi, patron!" says Monsieur Bidois, a great fellow, in boots and petticoat, with an eelskin queue hanging down to his heels. "C'est là le petit du pauv' Jean Louis? Est i genti le pti patron!"

And as he looks at me, he rubs a hand across his nose.

At this moment Madame la Comtesse gave one, two, three screams, a laugh, and cries—"Ah, c'est mon mari qui revient de la guerre. Il est là—à la croisée. Bon jour, Monsieur le Comte! Bon jour. Vous avez une petite fille bien laide, bien laide, que je n'aime pas du tout, pas du tout, pas du tout! He is there! I saw him at the window. There! there! Hide me from him! He will kill me, he will kill me!" she cried.

"Calmez-vous, Clarisse," says the Chevalier, who was

* There was a particular knock, as I learned later, in use among Grandpapa's private friends, and Monsieur Bidois no doubt had this signal.

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weary, no doubt, of the poor lady's endless outcries and follies.

"Calmez-vous, ma fille!" sings out Mother, from the inner room, where she was washing.

"Ah, Monsieur is the Chevalier de la Motte?" says Bidois.

"Après, Monsieur?" says the Chevalier, looking haughtily up from the cards.

"In that case, I have a letter for Monsieur le Chevalier." And the sailor handed to the Chevalier de la Motte that letter which I have translated, the ink of which was black and wet then, though now it is sere and faded.

This Chevalier had faced death and danger in a score of dare-devil expeditions. At the game of steel and lead there was no cooler performer. He put the letter which he had received quietly into his pocket, finished his game with the Countess, and telling Bidois to follow him to his lodgings, took leave of the company. I dare say the poor Countess built up a house with the cards, and took little more notice. Mother, going to close the shutters, said, "It was droll, that little man, the friend to Bidois, was still standing in the street." You see we had all sorts of droll friends. Seafaring men, speaking a jargon of English, French, Dutch, were constantly dropping in upon us. Dear Heaven! when I think in what a company I have lived, and what a *galère* I rowed in, is it not a wonder that I did not finish where some of my friends did?

I made a *drole de métier* at this time. I was set by Grandfather to learn his business. Our apprentice taught me the commencement of the noble art of wig-weaving. As soon as I was tall enough to stand to a gentleman's nose I was promised to be *promoted* to be a shaver. I trotted on Mother's errands with her bandboxes, and what not; and I was made dry-nurse to poor Madame's baby, who, as I said, loved me most of all in the house; and who would put her little dimpled hands out and crow with delight to see me. The first day I went out with this little baby in a little wheel-chair Mother got for her, the town boys made rare fun of me: and I had to fight one, as poor little Agnes sat sucking her little thumb in

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her chair, I suppose; and whilst the battle was going on, who should come up but Doctor Barnard, the English rector of Saint Philip's, who lent us French Protestants the nave of his church for our service, whilst our tumbledown old church was being mended. Doctor Barnard (for a reason which I did not know at that time, but which I am compelled to own now was a good one) did not like Grandfather, nor Mother, nor our family. You may be sure our people abused him in return. He was called a haughty priest—a vilain beeg-veeg, Mother used to say, in her French-English. And perhaps one of the causes of her dislike to him was, that his *big vig*—a fine cauliflower it was—was powdered at another barber's. Well, whilst the battle royal was going on between me and Tom Caffin (dear heart! how well I remember the fellow, though—let me see—it is fifty-four years since we punched each other's little noses), Doctor Barnard walks up to us boys and stops the fighting. "You little rogues! I'll have you all put in the stocks and whipped by my beadle," says the Doctor, who was a magistrate too: "as for this little French barber, he is always in mischief."

"They laughed at me and called me Dry-nurse, and wanted to upset the little cart, sir, and I wouldn't bear it. And it's my duty to protect a poor child that can't help itself," said I, very stoutly. "Her mother is ill. Her nurse has run away, and she has nobody—nobody to protect her but me—and 'Notre Père qui est aux cieux;'" and I held up my little hand as Grandfather used to do; "and if those boys hurt the child I *will* fight for her."

The Doctor rubbed his hand across his eyes; and he felt in his pocket and gave me a dollar.

"And come to see us all at the Rectory, child," Mrs. Barnard says, who was with the Doctor; and she looked at the little baby that was in its cot, and said, "Poor thing, poor thing!"

And the Doctor, turning round to the English boys, still holding me by the hand, said, "Mind, all you boys! If I hear of you being such cowards again as to strike this little lad for doing his duty, I will have you whipped by my beadle, as sure as my name is Thomas Barnard. Shake hands, you

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Thomas Caffin, with the French boy;" and I said, "I would shake hands or fight it out whenever Tom Caffin liked;" and so took my place as pony again, and pulled my little cart down Sandgate.

These stories got about amongst the townspeople, and fishermen, and seafaring folk, I suppose, and the people of our little circle; and they were the means, God help me, of bringing me in those very early days a *legacy* which I have still. You see, the day after Bidois, the French fisherman, paid us a visit, as I was pulling my little cart up the hill to a little farmer's house where Grandfather and a partner of his had some pigeons, of which I was very fond as a boy, I met a little dark man whose face I cannot at all recall to my mind, but who spoke French and German to me like Grandfather and Mother. "That is the child of Madame von Zabern?" says he, trembling very much.

"Ja, Herr!" says the little boy. . . .

O Agnes, Agnes! How the years roll away! What strange events have befallen us: what passionate griefs have we had to suffer: what a merciful Heaven has protected us, since that day when your father knelt over the little car, in which his child lay sleeping! I have the picture in my mind now. I see a winding road leading down to one of the gates of our town; the blue marsh-land, and yonder, across the marsh, Rye towers and gables; a great silver sea stretching beyond; and that dark man's figure stooping and looking at the child asleep. He never kissed the infant or touched her. I remember it woke smiling, and held out its little arms, and he turned away with a sort of groan.

Bidois, the French fisherman I spoke of as having been to see us on the night before, came up here with another companion, an Englishman I think.

"Ah! we seek for you everywhere, Monsieur le Comte," says he. "The tide serves and it is full time."

"Monsieur le Chevalier is on board?" says the Count de Saverne.

"Il est bien là," says the fisherman. And they went down the hill through the gate, without turning to look back.

Mother was quite quiet and gentle all that day. It seemed

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as if something scared her. The poor Countess prattled and laughed, or cried in her unconscious way. But Grandfather at evening prayer that night making the exposition rather long, Mother stamped her foot, and said, "Assez bavardé comme ça, mon père," and sank back in her chair with her apron over her face.

She remained all next day very silent, crying often, and reading in our great German Bible. She was kind to me that day. I remember her saying, in her deep voice, "Thou art a brave boy, Denikin." It was seldom she patted my head so softly. That night our patient was very wild; and laughing a great deal, and singing so that the people would stop in the streets to listen.

Doctor Barnard again met me that day dragging my little carriage, and he fetched me into the Rectory for the first time, and gave me cake and wine, and the book of the "Arabian Nights," and the ladies admired the little baby, and said it was a pity it was a little Papist, and the Doctor hoped *I* was not going to turn Papist, and I said "Oh, never." Neither Mother nor I liked that darkling Roman Catholic clergyman who was fetched over from our neighbours at the Priory by Monsieur de la Motte. The Chevalier was very firm himself in that religion. I little thought then that I was to see him on a day when his courage and his faith were both to have an awful trial.

. . . I was reading then in this fine book of Monsieur Galland which the Doctor had given me. I had no orders to go to bed, strange to say, and I dare say was peeping into the cave of the Forty Thieves along with Master Ali Baba, when I heard the clock whirring previously to striking twelve, and steps coming rapidly up our empty street.

Mother started up, looking quite haggard, and undid the bolt of the door.

"C'est lui!" says she, with her eyes starting, and the Chevalier de la Motte came in, looking as white as a corpse.

Poor Madame de Saverne upstairs, awakened by the striking clock perhaps, began to sing overhead, and the Chevalier gave a great start, looking more ghastly than before, as my mother with an awful face looked at him.

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"Il l'a voulu," says Monsieur de la Motte, hanging down his head; and again poor Madame's crazy voice began to sing.

Report.

"On the 27th June of this year, 1769, the Comte de Saverne arrived at Boulogne-sur-Mer, and lodged at the Ecu de France, where also was staying Monsieur le Marquis du Quesne Menneville, Chef d'Escadre of the Naval Armies of His Majesty. The Comte de Saverne was previously unknown to the Marquis du Quesne, but recalling to Monsieur du Quesne's remembrance the fact that his illustrious ancestor the Admiral du Quesne professed the Reformed religion, as did Monsieur de Saverne himself, Monsieur de Saverne entreated the Marquis du Quesne to be his friend in a rencontre which deplorable circumstances rendered unavoidable.

"At the same time, Monsieur de Saverne stated to Monsieur le Marquis du Quesne the causes of his quarrel with the Chevalier Francis Joseph de la Motte, late officer of the regiment of Soubise, at present residing in England in the town of Winchelsea, in the county of Sussex. The statement made by the Comte de Saverne was such as to convince Monsieur du Quesne of the Count's right to exact a reparation from the Chevalier de la Motte.

"A boat was despatched on the night of the 29th June, with a messenger bearing the note of Monsieur le Comte de Saverne. And in this boat Monsieur de la Motte returned from England.

"The undersigned Comte de Bérigny, in garrison at Boulogne, and an acquaintance of Monsieur de la Motte, consented to serve as his witness in the meeting with Monsieur de Saverne.

"The meeting took place at seven o'clock in the morning, on the sands at half a league from the port of Boulogne: and the weapons chosen were pistols. Both gentlemen were perfectly calm and collected, as one might expect from officers distinguished in the King's service, who had faced the enemies of France as comrades together.

"Before firing, Monsieur le Chevalier de la Motte advanced four steps, and holding his pistol down, and laying his hand on his heart, he said,—'I swear on the faith of a Christian, and the honour of a gentleman, that I am innocent of the charge laid against me by Monsieur de Saverne.'

"The Comte de Saverne said,—'Monsieur le Chevalier de la Motte, I have made no charge; and if I had, a lie costs you nothing.'

"Monsieur de la Motte, saluting the witnesses courteously, and

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with grief rather than anger visible upon his countenance, returned to his line on the sand which was marked out as the place where he was to stand, at a distance of ten paces from his adversary.

"At the signal being given both fired simultaneously. The ball of Monsieur de Saverne grazed Monsieur de la Motte's side curl, while his ball struck Monsieur de Saverne in the right breast. Monsieur de Saverne stood a moment, and fell.

"The seconds, the surgeon, and Monsieur de la Motte advanced towards the fallen gentleman; and Monsieur de la Motte, holding up his hand, again said,—'I take Heaven to witness the person is innocent.'

"The Comte de Saverne seemed to be about to speak. He lifted himself from the sand, supporting himself on one arm: but all he said was,—'You, you——' and a great issue of blood rushed from his throat, and he fell back, and, with a few convulsions, died.

(Signed) "MARQUIS DU QUESNE MENNEVILLE,
"*Chef d'Escadre aux Armées Navales du Roy.*

"COMTE DE BÉRIGNY,
"*Brigadier de Cavalerie.*"

Surgeon's Report.

"I, JEAN BATISTE DROUOT, Surgeon-Major of the Regiment Royal Cravate, in garrison at Boulogne-sur-Mer, certify that I was present at the meeting which ended so lamentably. The death of the gentleman who succumbed was immediate; the ball, passing to the right of the middle of the breastbone, penetrated the lung and the large artery supplying it with blood, and caused death by immediate suffocation."

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LAST MOMENTS OF THE COUNT DE SAVERNE.

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CHAPTER IV.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

THAT last night which he was to pass upon earth, Monsieur de Saverne spent in a little tavern in Winchelsea, frequented by fishing people, and known to Bidois, who, even during the war, was in the constant habit of coming to England upon errands in which Monsieur Grandpapa was very much interested—precentor, elder, perruquier as he was.

The Count de Saverne had had some talk with the fishermen during the voyage from Boulogne, and more conversation took place on this last night, when the Count took Bidois partly into his confidence: and, without mentioning the precise cause of his quarrel with Monsieur de la Motte, said that it was inevitable; that the man was a villain who ought not to be allowed to pollute the earth; and that no criminal was ever more righteously executed than this Chevalier would be on the morrow, when it was agreed that the two were to meet.

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The meeting would have taken place on that very night, but Monsieur de la Motte demanded, as indeed he had a right to do, some hours for the settlement of his own affairs; and preferred to fight on French ground rather than English, as the survivor of the quarrel would be likely to meet with very rough treatment in this country.

La Motte betook himself then to arranging his papers. As for the Count de Saverne, he said all his dispositions were made. A dowry,—that which his wife brought—would go to her child. His own property was devised to his own relations, and he could give the child nothing. He had only a few pieces in his purse, and, "*Tenez*," says he, "this watch. Should anything befall me, I desire it may be given to the little boy who saved my—that is, her child." And the voice of Monsieur le Comte broke as he said these words, and the tears ran over his fingers. And the seaman wept too, as he told the story to me, years after, nor were some of mine wanting, I think, for that poor, heart-broken, wretched man, writhing in helpless agony, as the hungry sand drank his blood. Assuredly, the guilt of that blood was on thy head, Francis de la Motte.

The watch is ticking on the table before me as I write. It has been my companion for half a century. I remember my childish delight when Bidois brought it to me, and told my mother the tale of the meeting of the two gentlemen.

"You see her condition," Monsieur de la Motte said to my mother at this time. "We are separated for ever, as hopelessly as though one or other were dead. My hand slew her husband. Perhaps my fault destroyed her reason. I transmit misfortunes to those I love and would serve. Shall I marry her? I will if you think I can serve her. As long as a guinea remains to me, I will halve it with her. I have but very few left now. My fortune has crumbled under my hands as have my friendships, my once bright prospects, my ambitions. I am a doomed man. Somehow, I drag down those who love me into my doom."

And so indeed there was a *Cain mark*, as it were, on this unhappy man. He *did* bring wreck and ruin on those who loved him. He was as a lost soul, I somehow think, whose tortures

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had begun already. Predestined to evil, to crime, to gloom; but now and again someone took pity upon this poor wretch, and amongst those who pitied him was my stern mother.

And here I may relate how it happened that I "saved" the child, for which act poor Monsieur de Saverne rewarded me. Bidois no doubt told that story to Monsieur le Comte in the course of their gloomy voyage. Mrs. Martha, the Countess's attendant, had received or taken leave of absence one night, after putting the child and the poor lady, who was no better than a child, to bed. I went to my bed, and to sleep as boys sleep; and I forget what business called away my mother likewise; but when she came back to look for her poor Biche and the infant in its cradle—both were gone.

I have seen the incomparable Siddons in the play, as, white and terrified, she passed through the darkened hall after King Duncan's murder. My mother's face wore a look of terror to the full as tragical when, starting up from my boyish sleep, I sat up in my bed and saw her. She was almost beside herself with terror. The poor insane lady and her child were gone—who could say where? Into the marshes—into the sea —into the darkness—it was impossible to say whither the Countess had fled.

"We must get up, my boy, and find them," says Mother, in a hoarse voice; and I was sent over to Mr. Bliss's the grocer, in East Street, where the Chevalier lived, and where I found him sitting (with two priests, by the way, guests, no doubt, of Mr. Weston, at the Priory), and all these, and Mother, on her side, with me following her, went out to look for the fugitives.

We went by pairs, taking different roads. Mother's was the right one as it appeared, for we had not walked many minutes, when we saw a white figure coming towards us, glimmering out of the dark, and heard a voice singing.

"Ah, mon Dieu!" says Mother, and "Gott sey Dank!" and I know not what exclamations of gratitude and relief. It was the voice of the Countess.

As we came up, she knew us with our light, and began to imitate, in her crazy way, the cry of the watchman, whom the poor sleepless soul had often heard under the windows. "Past

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twelve o'clock, a starlight night!" she sang, and gave one of her sad laughs.

When we came up to her, we found her in a white wrapper, her hair flowing down her back and over her poor pale face, and again she sang, "Past twelve o'clock."

The child was not with her. Mother trembled in every limb. The lantern shook so in her hand I thought she would drop it.

She put it down on the ground. She took her shawl off her back and covered the poor lady with it, who smiled in her childish way, and said, "C'est bon; c'est chaud ça; ah! que c'est bien!"

As I chanced to look down at the lady's feet, I saw one of them was naked. Mother, herself in a dreadful agitation, embraced and soothed Madame de Saverne. "Tell me, my angel, tell me, my love, where is the child?" says Mother, almost fainting.

"The child! what child? That little brat who always cries? I know nothing about children," says the poor thing. "Take me to my bed this moment, madam! How dare you bring me into the streets with naked feet?"

"Where have you been walking, my dear?" says poor Mother, trying to soothe her.

"I have been to Great Saverne. I wore a domino. I knew the coachman quite well, though he was muffled up all but his nose. I was presented to Monseigneur the Cardinal. I made him such a curtsey—like this. Oh, my foot hurts me!"

She often rambled about this ball and play, and hummed snatches of tunes and little phrases of dialogue, which she may have heard there. Indeed, I believe it was the only play and ball the poor thing ever saw in her life; her brief life, her wretched life. 'Tis pitiful to think how unhappy it was. When I recall it, it tears my heart-strings somehow, as it doth to see a child in pain.

As she held up the poor bleeding foot, I saw that the edge of her dress was all wet, and covered *with sand.*

"Mother, mother!" said I, "she has been to the sea!"

"Have you been to the sea, Clarisse?" asks Mother.

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J'ai été au bal : j'ai dansé ; j'ai chanté. J'ai bien reconnu mon cocher. J'ai été au bal chez le Cardinal. But you must not tell Monsieur de Saverne. Oh, no, you mustn't tell him!"

A sudden thought came to me. And, whenever I remember it, my heart is full of thankfulness to the gracious Giver of all good thoughts. Madame, of whom I was not afraid, and who sometimes was amused by my prattle, would now and then take a walk accompanied by Martha, her maid, who held the infant, and myself, who liked to draw it in its little carriage. We used to walk down to the shore, and there was a rock there on which the poor lady would sit for hours.

"You take her home, Mother," says I, all in a tremble. "You give me the lantern, and I'll go—I'll go"—I was off before I said where. Down I went, through Westgate ; down I ran along the road towards the place I guessed at. When I had gone a few hundred yards, I saw in the road something white. It was *the Countess's slipper*, that she had left there. I knew she had gone that way.

I got down to the shore, running, running with all my little might. The moon had risen by this time, shining gloriously over a great silver sea. A tide of silver was pouring in over the sand. Yonder was that rock where we often had sat. The infant was sleeping on it under the stars unconscious. He, who loves little children, had watched over it. . . . I scarce can see the words as I write them down. My little baby was waking. She had known nothing of the awful sea coming nearer with each wave ; but she knew me as I came, and smiled, and warbled a little infant welcome. I took her up in my arms, and trotted home with my pretty burden. As I paced up the hill, Monsieur de la Motte and one of the French clergymen met me. By ones and twos, the other searchers after my little wanderer came home from their quest. She was laid in her little crib, and never knew, until years later, the danger from which she had been rescued.

My adventures became known in our town, and I made some acquaintances who were very kind to me, and were the means of advancing me in after-life. I was too young to

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understand much what was happening round about me; but now, if the truth must be told, I must confess that old Grandfather, besides his business of perruquier, which you will say is no very magnificent trade, followed others which were far less reputable. What do you say, for instance, of a church elder, who lends money *à la petite semaine*, and at great interest? The fishermen, the market-people, nay, one or two farmers and gentlemen round about, were beholden to Grandfather for supplies, and they came to him, to be *shaved* in more ways than one. No good came out of his gains, as I shall presently tell: but meanwhile his hands were for ever stretched out to claw other folks' money towards himself; and it must be owned that *Madame sa bru* loved a purse too, and was by no means scrupulous as to the way of filling it. Monsieur le Chevalier de la Motte was free-handed and grand in his manner. He paid a pension, I know not how much, for the maintenance of poor Madame de Saverne. He had brought her to the strait in which she was, poor thing! Had he not worked on her, she never would have left her religion: she never would have fled from her husband: that fatal duel would never have occurred: right or wrong, he was the cause of her calamity, and he would make it as light as it might be. I know how, for years, extravagant and embarrassed as he was, he yet supplied means for handsomely maintaining the little Agnes when she was presently left an orphan in the world, when mother and father both were dead, and her relatives at home disowned her.

The ladies of Barr, Agnes's aunts, totally denied that the infant was their brother's child, and refused any contribution towards her maintenance. Her mother's family equally disavowed her. They had been taught the same story, and I suppose we believe willingly enough what we wish to believe. The poor lady was guilty. Her child had been born in her husband's absence. When his return was announced, she fled from her home, not daring to face him; and the unhappy Count de Saverne died by the pistol of the man who had already robbed him of his honour. La Motte had to bear this obloquy, or only protest against it by letters from England. He could not go over to Lorraine, where he was plunged in debt. "At least, Duval," said he to me, when I shook hands with him,

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and with all my heart forgave him, "mad, and reckless as I have been, and fatal to all whom I loved, I have never allowed the child to want, and have supported her in comfort, when I was myself almost without a meal." A bad man no doubt this was; and yet not utterly wicked: a great criminal who paid an awful penalty. Let us be humble, who have erred too; and thankful, if we have a hope that we have found mercy.

I believe it was some braggart letter, which La Motte wrote to a comrade in Monsieur de Vaux's camp, and in which he boasted of making the conversion of a *petite Protestante* at Strasbourg, which came to the knowledge of poor Monsieur de Saverne, hastened his return home, and brought about this dreadful end. La Motte owned as much, indeed, in the last interview I ever had with him.

Who told Madame de Saverne of her husband's death? It was not for years after that I myself (unlucky chatterbox, whose tongue was always blabbing) knew what had happened. My mother thought that she must have overheard Bidois the boatman, who told the whole story over his glass of geneva in our parlour. The Countess's chamber was overhead, and the door left open. The poor thing used to be very angry at the notion of a locked door, and since that awful escapade to the sea-shore, my mother slept in her room, or a servant whom she liked pretty well supplied Mother's place.

In her condition the dreadful event affected her but little; and we never knew that she was aware of it until one evening when it happened that a neighbour, one of our French people of Rye, was talking over the tea-table, and telling us of a dreadful thing he had seen on Penenden Heath as he was coming home. He there saw *a woman burned at the stake* for the murder of her husband. The story is in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for the year 1769, and that will settle pretty well the date of the evening when our neighbour related the horrible tale to us.

Poor Madame de Saverne (who had a very grand air, and was perfectly like a lady) said quite simply, "In this case, my good Ursule, I shall be burned too. For you know I was the cause of my husband being killed. Monsieur le Chevalier went and killed him in Corsica." And she looked round with

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a little smile, and nodded; and arranged her white dress with her slim hot hands.

When the poor thing spoke, the Chevalier sank back as if he had been shot himself.

"Good-night, neighbour Marion," groans Mother; "she is very bad to-night. Come to bed, my dear, come to bed." And the poor thing followed Mother, curtseying very finely to the company, and saying, quite softly, "Oui, oui, oui, they will burn me; they will burn me."

This idea seized upon her mind, and never left it. Madame la Comtesse passed a night of great agitation; talking incessantly. Mother and her maid were up with her all night. All night long we could hear her songs, her screams, her terrible laughter. . . . Oh, pitiful was thy lot in this world, poor guiltless, harmless lady! In thy brief years, how little happiness! For thy marriage portion only gloom, and terror, and submission, and captivity. The awful Will above us ruled it so. Poor frightened spirit! it has woke under serener skies now, and passed out of reach of our terrors, and temptations, and troubles.

At my early age I could only be expected to obey my elders and parents, and to consider all things were right which were done round about me. Mother's cuffs on the head I received without malice, and if the truth must be owned, had not seldom to submit to the *major* operation which my grandfather used to perform with a certain rod which he kept in a locked cupboard, and accompany with long wearisome sermons between each cut or two of his favourite instrument. These good people, as I gradually began to learn, bore but an indifferent reputation in the town which they inhabited, and were neither liked by the French of their own colony, nor by the English among whom we dwelt. Of course, being a simple little fellow, I honoured my father and mother as became me —my grandfather and mother, that is—father being dead some years.

Grandfather, I knew, had a share in a fishing-boat, as numbers of people had, both at Rye and Winchelsea. Stokes, our fisherman, took me out once or twice, and I liked the

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sport very much: but it appeared that I ought to have said nothing about the boat and the fishing—for one night when we pulled out only a short way beyond a rock which we used to call the Bull Rock, from a pair of horns which stuck out of the water, and there were hailed by my old friend Bidois, who had come from Boulogne in his lugger—and then . . . well then, I was going to explain the whole matter artlessly to one of our neighbours who happened to step in to supper, when Grandpapa (who had made a grace of five minutes long before taking the dish-cover off) fetched me a slap across the face which sent me reeling off my perch. And the Chevalier, who was supping with us, only laughed at my misfortune.

This being laughed at somehow affected me more than the blows. I was used to those, from Grandfather and Mother too; but when people once had been kind to me I could not bear a different behaviour from them. And this gentleman certainly was. He improved my French very much, and used to laugh at my blunders and bad pronunciation. He took a good deal of pains with me when I was at home, and made me speak French like a little gentleman.

In a very brief time he learned English himself, with a droll accent to be sure, but so as to express himself quite intelligibly. His headquarters were at Winchelsea, though he would frequently be away at Deal, Dover, Canterbury, even London. He paid Mother a pension for little Agnes, who grew apace, and was the most winning child I ever set eyes on. I remember, as well as yesterday, the black dress which was made for her after her poor mother's death, her pale cheeks, and the great solemn eyes gazing out from under the black curling ringlets which fell over her forehead and face.

Why do I make zig-zag journeys? 'Tis the privilege of old age to be garrulous, and its happiness to remember early days. As I sink back in my arm-chair, safe and sheltered *post tot discrimina*, and happier than it has been the lot of most fellow-sinners to be, the past comes back to me—the stormy past, the strange unhappy yet happy past—and I look at it scared and astonished sometimes; as huntsmen look at the gaps and ditches over which they have leapt, and wonder how they are alive.

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My good fortune in rescuing that little darling child caused the Chevalier to be very kind to me; and when he was with us, I used to hang on to the skirts of his coat, and prattle for hours together, quite losing all fear of him. Except my kind namesake, the Captain and Admiral, this was the first *gentleman* I ever met in intimacy—a gentleman with many a stain, nay crime to reproach him; but not all lost, I hope and pray. I own to having a kindly feeling towards that fatal man. I see myself a child prattling at his coat-skirts, and trotting along our roads and marshes with him. I see him with his sad pale face—and a kind of *blighting* look he had—looking at that unconscious lady, at that little baby. My friends the Neapolitans would have called his an evil eye, and exorcised it accordingly. A favourite walk we had was to a house about a mile out of Winchelsea, where a grazing farmer lived. My delight then was to see not his cattle, but his pigeons, of which he had a good stock, of croppers, pouters, runts, and turbits; and amongst these I was told there were a sort of pigeons called carriers, which would fly for prodigious distances, returning from the place to which they were taken though it were ever so distant, to that where they lived and were bred.

Whilst I was at Mr. Perreau's, one of these pigeons actually came in flying from the sea, as it appeared to me: and Perreau looked at it, and fondled it, and said to the Chevalier, "There is nothing. It is to be at the old place." On which Monsieur le Chevalier only said, "C'est bien;" and as we walked away told me all he knew about pigeons, which I dare say was no great knowledge.

Why did he say there was nothing? I asked in the innocence of my prattle. The Chevalier told me that these birds sometimes brought messages, written on a little paper, and tied under their wings, and that Perreau said there was nothing because there was nothing.

"Oh, then! he sometimes *does* have messages with his birds?"

The Chevalier shrugged his shoulders, and took a great pinch out of his fine snuff-box. "What did Papa Duval do to you the other day when you began to talk too fast?" says

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he. "Learn to hold thy little tongue, Denis, *mon garçon*. If thou livest a little longer, and tellest all thou seest, the Lord help thee!" And I suppose our conversation ended here, and he strode home, and I trotted after him.

I narrate these things occurring in childhood by the help of one or two marks which have been left behind—as the ingenious boy found his way home by the pebbles which he dropped along his line of march. Thus I happen to know the year when poor Madame de Saverne must have been ill, by referring to the date of the execution of the woman whom our neighbour saw burned on Penenden Heath. Was it days, was it weeks after this that Madame de Saverne's illness ended as all our illnesses will end one day?

During the whole course of her illness, whatever its length may have been, those priests from Slindon (or from Mr. Weston's the Popish gentleman's at the Priory) were constantly in our house, and I suppose created a great scandal among the Protestants of the town. Monsieur de la Motte showed an extraordinary zeal in this business; and, sinner as he was, certainly was a most devout sinner, according to his persuasion. I do not remember, or was not cognisant, when the end came; but I remember my astonishment as, passing by her open chamber door, I saw candles lighted before her bed, and some of those clergy watching there, and the Chevalier de la Motte kneeling in the passage in an attitude of deep contrition and grief.

On that last day there was, as it appeared, a great noise and disturbance round our house. The people took offence at the perpetual coming in and out of the priest; and on the very night when the coffin was to be taken from our house, and the clergymen were performing the last services there, the windows of the room, where the poor lady lay, were broken in by a great volley of stones, and a roaring mob shouting, "No Popery! Down with the priests!"

Grandfather lost all courage at these threatening demonstrations, and screamed out at his *bru* for bringing all this persecution and danger upon him. "Silence, misérable!" says she. "Go sit in the back kitchen, and count your money-bags!" *She*, at least, did not lose her courage.

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Monsieur de la Motte, though not frightened, was much disturbed. The matter might be very serious. I did not know at the time how furiously angry our townspeople were with my parents for harbouring a Papist. Had they known that the lady was a converted Protestant, they would, doubtless, have been more violent still.

We were in a manner besieged in our house; the garrison being—the two priests in much terror; my grandfather, under the bed for what I know, or somewhere where he would be equally serviceable; my mother and the Chevalier, with their wits about them; and little Denis Duval, no doubt very much in the way. When the poor lady died it was thought advisable to send her little girl out of the way; and Mrs. Weston at the Priory took her in, who belonged, as has before been said, to the ancient faith.

We looked out with no little alarm for the time when the hearse should come to take the poor lady's body away; for the people would not leave the street, and barricaded either end of it, having perpetrated no actual violence beyond the smashing of the windows as yet, but ready no doubt for more mischief.

Calling me to him, Monsieur de la Motte said, "Denis, thou rememberest about the carrier pigeon the other day with nothing under his wing?" I remembered, of course.

"Thou shalt be my carrier pigeon. Thou shalt carry no letter, but a message. I can trust thee now with a secret." And I kept it, and will tell it now that the people are quite out of danger from *that* piece of intelligence, as I can promise you.

"You know Mr. Weston's house?" Know the house where Agnes was—the best house in the town? Of course I did. He named eight or ten houses besides Weston's at which I was to go and say, "The mackerel are coming in. Come as many of you as can." And I went to the houses, and said the words; and when the people said "Where?" I said, "Opposite our house," and so went on.

The last and handsomest house (I had never been in it before) was Mr. Weston's, at the Priory: and there I went and called to see him. And I remember Mrs. Weston was walking

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up and down a gallery over the hall with a little crying child who would not go to sleep.

"Agnes, Agnes!" says I, and that baby was quiet in a minute, smiling, and crowing and flinging out her arms. Indeed, mine was the first name she could speak.

The gentlemen came out of their parlour, where they were over their pipes, and asked me, surlily enough, what I wanted. I said, "The mackerel are out, and the crews are wanted before Peter Duval's, the barber's." And one of them, with a scowl on his face, and an oath, said they would be there, and shut the door in my face.

As I went away from the Priory, and crossed the churchyard by the Rectory gate, who should come up but Doctor Barnard in his gig, with lamps lighted; and I always saluted him after he had been so kind to me, and had given me the books and the cake. "What," says he, "my little shrimper! Have you fetched any fish off the rocks to-night?"

"Oh, no, sir!" says I. "I have been taking messages all round."

"And what message, my boy?"

I told him the message about the mackerel, &c.; but added that I must not tell the names, for the Chevalier had desired me not to mention them. And then I went on to tell how there was a great crowd in the street, and that they were breaking windows at our house.

"Breaking windows? What for?" I told him what had happened. "Take Dolly to the stables. Don't say anything to your mistress, Samuel, and come along with me, my little shrimper," says the Doctor. He was a very tall man in a great white wig. I see him now skipping over the tombstones, by the great ivy tower of the church, and so through the churchyard-gate towards our house.

The hearse had arrived by this time. The crowd had increased, and there was much disturbance and agitation. As soon as the hearse came, a yell rose up from the people. "Silence! shame! Hold your tongue! Let the poor woman go in quiet," a few people said. These were the men of the *mackerel fishery*; whom the Weston gentlemen presently joined. But the fishermen were a small crowd; the townspeople

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were many and very angry. As we passed by the end of Port Street (where our house was) we could see the people crowding at either end of the street, and in the midst the great hearse with its black plumes before our door.

It was impossible that the hearse could pass through the crowd at either end of the street, if the people were determined to bar the way. I went in, as I had come, by the back gate of the garden, where the lane was still quite solitary, Doctor Barnard following me. We were awfully scared as we passed through the back kitchen (where the oven and boiler are) by the sight of an individual who suddenly leapt out of the copper, and who cried out, "O mercy, mercy! save me from the wicked men!" This was my grandpapa, and with all respect for grandpapas (being of their age and standing myself now), I cannot but own that mine on this occasion cut rather a pitiful figure.

"Save my house! Save my property!" shouts my ancestor, and the Doctor turns away from him scornfully, and passes on.

In the passage out of this back kitchen we met Monsieur de la Motte, who says, "Ah, c'est toi, mon garçon! Thou hast been on thy errands? Our people are well there?" and he makes a bow to the Doctor, who came in with me, and who replied by a salutation equally stiff. Monsieur de la Motte, reconnoitring from the upper room, had, no doubt, seen his people arrive. As I looked towards him I remarked that he was armed. He had a belt with pistols in it, and a sword by his side.

In the back room were the two Roman Catholic clergymen, and four men who had come with the hearse. They had been fiercely assailed as they entered the house with curses, shouts, hustling, and I believe even sticks and stones. My mother was serving them with brandy when we came in. She was astonished when she saw the Rector make his appearance in our house. There was no love between his Reverence and our family.

He made a very grand obeisance to the Roman Catholic clergymen. "Gentlemen," said he, "as rector of this parish, and magistrate of the county, I have come to keep the peace,

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and if there is any danger, to share it with you. The lady will be buried in the old churchyard, I hear. Mr. Trestles, are you ready to move?"

The men said they would be prepared immediately, and went to bring down their melancholy burden. "Open the door, you!" says the Doctor. The people within shrank back. "*I* will do it," says Mother.

"Et moi, parbleu!" says the Chevalier advancing, his hand on his hilt.

"I think, sir, I shall be more serviceable than you," says the Doctor, very coldly. "If these gentlemen my *confrères* are ready, we will go out; I will go first, as rector of this parish.' And Mother drew the bolts, and he walked out and took off his hat.

A Babel roar of yells, shouts, curses came pouring into the hall as the door opened, and the Doctor remained on the steps, bareheaded and undaunted.

"How many of my parishioners are here? Stand aside all who come to my church!" he called out very bold.

At this arose immense roars of "No Popery! down with the priests! down with them! drown them!" and I know not what more words of hatred and menace.

"You men of the French church," shouted out the Doctor, "are you here?"

"We are here! Down with Popery!" roar the Frenchmen.

"Because you were persecuted a hundred years ago, you want to persecute in your turn. Is that what your Bible teaches you? Mine doesn't. When your church wanted repair, I gave you my nave, where you had your service, and were welcome. Is this the way you repay kindness which has been shown to you, you who ought to know better? For shame on you! I say, for shame! Don't try and frighten *me*. Roger Hooker, I know you, you poaching vagabond! Who kept your wife and children when you were at Lewes Gaol? How dare *you* be persecuting anybody, Thomas Flint? As sure as my name is Barnard, if you stop this procession, I will commit you to-morrow."

Here was a cry of "Huzzay for the Doctor! huzzay for the Rector!" which I am afraid came from the *mackerels*, who

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were assembled by this time, and were *not* mum, as fish generally are.

"Now, gentlemen, advance, if you please!" This he said to the two foreign clergymen, who came forward courageously enough, the Chevalier de la Motte walking behind them. "Listen, you friends and parishioners, Churchmen and Dissenters! These two foreign dissenting clergymen are going to bury, in a neighbouring churchyard, a departed sister, as you foreign dissenters have buried your own dead without harm or hindrance; and I will accompany these gentlemen to the grave prepared for the deceased lady, and I will see her laid in peace there, as surely as I hope myself to lie in peace."

Here the people shouted; but it was with admiration for the Rector. There was no outcry any more. The little procession fell into an orderly rank, passed through the streets, and round the Protestant church to the old burying-ground behind the house of the Priory. The Rector walked between the two Roman Catholic clergymen. I imagine the scene before me now—the tramp of the people, the flicker of a torch or two; and then we go in at the gate of the Priory ground into the old graveyard of the monastery, where a grave had been dug, on which the stone still tells that Clarissa, born De Viomesnil, and widow of Francis Stanislas Count of Saverne and Barr in Lorraine, lies buried beneath.

When the service was ended, the Chevalier de la Motte (by whose side I stood, holding by his cloak) came up to the Doctor. "Monsieur le Docteur," says he, "you have acted like a gallant man; you have prevented bloodshed——"

"I am fortunate, sir," says the Doctor.

"You have saved the lives of these two worthy ecclesiastics, and rescued from insult the remains of one——"

"Of whom I know the sad history," says the Doctor, very gravely.

"I am not rich, but will you permit me to give this purse for your poor?"

"Sir, it is my duty to accept it," replied the Doctor. The purse contained a hundred louis, as he afterwards told me.

"And may I ask to take your hand, sir?" cries the poor Chevalier, clasping his own together.

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"No, sir!" said the Doctor, putting his own hands behind his back. "Your hands have that on them which the gift of a few guineas cannot wash away." The Doctor spoke very good French. "My child, good-night; and the best thing I can wish thee is to wish thee out of the hands of that man."

"Monsieur!" says the Chevalier, laying his hand on his sword mechanically.

"I think, sir, the last time it was with the pistol you showed your skill!" says Doctor Barnard, and went in at his own wicket as he spoke, leaving poor La Motte like a man who has just been struck with a blow; and then he fell to weeping and crying that the curse—the curse of Cain was upon him.

"My good boy," the old Rector said to me in after days, while talking over these adventures, "thy friend the Chevalier was the most infernal scoundrel I ever set eyes on, and I never looked at his foot without expecting to see it was cloven."

"And could he tell me anything about the poor Countess?" I asked. He knew nothing. He saw her but once, he thought. "And faith," says he with an arch look, "it so happened that I was not too intimate with your *own* worthy family."

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CHAPTER V.

I HEAR THE SOUND OF BOW BELLS.

WHATEVER may have been the Rector's dislike to my parents, in respect of us juniors and my dear little Agnes de Saverne he had no such prejudices, and both of us were great favourites with him. He considered himself to be a man entirely without prejudices; and towards Roman Catholics he certainly was most liberal. He sent his wife to see Mrs. Weston, and an acquaintance was made between the families, who had scarcely known each other before. Little Agnes was constantly with these Westons, with whom the Chevalier de la Motte also became intimate. Indeed, we have seen that he must have known them already, when he sent me on the famous "mackerel" message which brought together a score at least of townspeople. I remember Mrs. Weston as a frightened-looking woman, who seemed as if she had a ghost constantly before her. Frightened, however, or not, she was always kind to my little Agnes.

The younger of the Weston brothers (he who swore at me the night of the burial) was a red-eyed, pimple-faced, cock-fighting gentleman for ever on the trot, and known, I dare

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say not very favourably, all the country round. They were said to be gentlemen of good private means. They lived in a pretty genteel way, with a postchaise for the lady, and excellent nags to ride. They saw very little company; but this may have been because they were Roman Catholics, of whom there were not many in the county, except at Arundel and Slindon, where the lords and ladies were of too great quality to associate with a pair of mere fox-hunting, horse-dealing squires. Monsieur de la Motte, who was quite the fine gentleman, as I have said, associated with these people freely enough: but then he had interests in common with them, which I began to understand when I was some ten or a dozen years old, and used to go to see my little Agnes at the Priory. She was growing apace to be a fine lady. She had dancing-masters, music-masters, language-masters (those foreign *tonsured* gentry who were always about the Priory), and was so tall that Mother talked of putting powder in her hair. Ah, belle dame! another hand hath since whitened it, though I love it, ebony or silver!

I continued at Rye School, boarding with Mr. Rudge and his dram-drinking daughter, and got a pretty fair smattering of such learning as was to be had at the school. I had a fancy to go to sea, but Doctor Barnard was strong against that wish of mine: unless indeed I should go out of Rye and Winchelsea altogether—get into a King's ship, and perhaps on the quarter-deck, under the patronage of my friend Sir Peter Denis, who ever continued to be kind to me.

Every Saturday night I trudged home from Rye, as gay as schoolboy could be. After Madame de Saverne's death the Chevalier de la Motte took our lodgings on the first-floor. He was of an active disposition, and found business in plenty to occupy him. He would be absent from his lodgings for weeks and months. He made journeys on horseback into the interior of the country; went to London often; and sometimes abroad with our fishermen's boats. As I have said, he learned our language well, and taught me his. Mother's German was better than her French, and my book for reading the German was Doctor Luther's Bible; indeed, that very volume in which

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poor Monsieur de Saverne wrote down his prayer for the child whom he was to see only twice in this world.

Though Agnes's little chamber was always ready at our house, where she was treated like a little lady, having a servant specially attached to her, and all the world to spoil her, she passed a great deal of time with Mrs. Weston, of the Priory, who took a great affection for the child even before she lost her own daughter. I have said that good masters were here found for her. She learned to speak English as a native, of course, and French and music from the fathers who always were about the house. Whatever the child's expenses or wants were, Monsieur de la Motte generously defrayed them. After his journeys he would bring her back toys, sweetmeats, knick-knacks fit for a little duchess. She lorded it over great and small in the Priory, in the *Perruquery*, as we may call my mother's house, ay, and in the Rectory too, where Doctor and Mrs. Barnard were her very humble servants, like all the rest of us.

And here I may as well tell you that I was made to become a member of the Church of England, because Mother took huff at our French Protestants, who would continue persecuting her for harbouring the Papists, and insisted that between the late poor Countess and the Chevalier there had been an unlawful intimacy. Monsieur Borel, our pastor, preached at poor Mother several times, she said. I did not understand his innuendoes, being a simple child, I fear not caring much for sermons in those days. For Grandpapa's I know I did not; he used to give us half-an-hour at morning, and half-an-hour at evening. I could not help thinking of Grandfather skipping out of the copper, and calling on us to spare his life on the day of the funeral; and his preaching went in at one ear and out at t'other. One day—*à propos* of some pomatum which a customer wanted to buy, and which I knew Mother made with lard and bergamot herself—I heard him tell such a fib to a customer, that somehow I never could respect the old man afterwards. He actually said the pomatum had just come to him from France direct—from the Dauphin's own hairdresser: and our neighbour, I dare say, would have bought it, but I said, "Oh, Grandpapa, you must mean some

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other pomatum! I saw Mother make this with her own hands." Grandfather actually began to cry when I said this. He said I was being his death. He asked that somebody should fetch him out and hang him that moment. Why is there no bear, says he, to eat that little monster's head off and destroy that prodigy of crime? Nay, I used to think I *was* a monster sometimes: he would go on so fiercely about my wickedness and perverseness.

Doctor Barnard was passing by our pole one day, and our open door, when Grandfather was preaching upon this sin of mine, with a strap in one hand, laying over my shoulders in the intervals of the discourse. Down goes the strap in a minute, as the Doctor's lean figure makes its appearance at the door; and Grandfather begins to smirk and bow, and hope his Reverence was well. My heart was full. I had had sermon in the morning, and sermon at night, and strapping every day that week; and Heaven help me, I loathed that old man, and loathe him still.

"How can I, sir," says I, bursting out into a passion of tears—"How can I honour my grandfather and mother if Grandfather tells such d—— lies as he does?" And I stamped with my feet, trembling with wrath and indignation at the disgrace put upon me. I then burst out with my story, which there was no controverting; and I will say Grandfather looked at me as if he would kill me; and I ended my tale sobbing at the Doctor's knees.

"Listen, Mr. Duval," says Doctor Barnard, very sternly: "I know a great deal more than you think about you and your doings. My advice to you is to treat this child well, and to leave off some practices which will get you into trouble, as sure as your name is what it is. I know where your pigeons go to, and where they come from. And some day, when I have you in my justice-room, we shall see whether I will show you any more mercy than you have shown to this child. I know you to be——" and the Doctor whispered something into Grandfather's ears and stalked away.

Can you guess by what name the Doctor called my grandfather? If he called him hypocrite, *ma foi*, he was not far wrong. But the truth is, he called him smuggler, and that

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was a name which fitted hundreds of people along our coast, I promise you. At Hythe, at Folkestone, at Dover, Deal, Sandwich, there were scores and scores of these gentry. All the way to London they had depôts, friends, and correspondents. Inland and along the Thames there were battles endless between them and the revenue people. Our friends "the mackerel," who came out at Monsieur de la Motte's summons, of course were of this calling. One day when he came home from one of his expeditions, I remember jumping forward to welcome him, for he was at one time very kind to me, and as I ran into his arms he started back, and shrieked out an oath and a *sacré bleu* or two. He was wounded in the arm. There had been a regular battle at Deal between the dragoons and revenue officers on the one side, and the smugglers and their friends. Cavalry had charged cavalry, and Monsieur de la Motte (his smuggling name, he told me afterwards, was Mr. Paul, or Pole) had fought on the *mackerel* side.

So were my gentlemen at the Priory of the Mackerel party. Why, I could name you great names of merchants and bankers at Canterbury, Dover, Rochester, who were engaged in this traffic. My grandfather, you see, howled with the wolves; but then he used to wear a snug *lamb's-skin* over his wolf's hide. Ah, shall I thank Heaven, like the Pharisee, that I am not as those men are? I hope there is no harm in being thankful that I have been brought out of temptation; that I was not made a rogue at a child's age; and that I did not come to the gallows as a man. Such a fate has befallen more than one of the precious friends of my youth, as I shall have to relate in due season.

That habit I had of speaking out everything that was on my mind, brought me, as a child, into innumerable scrapes, but I do thankfully believe has preserved me from still greater. What could you do with a little chatterbox, who, when his grandfather offered to sell a pot of pomatum as your true Pommade de Cythère, must cry out, "No, Grandpapa, Mother made it with marrow and bergamot"? If anything happened which I was not to mention, I was sure to blunder out some account of it. Good Doctor Barnard, and my patron Captain Denis (who was a great friend of our Rector), I suppose used

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to joke about this propensity of mine, and would laugh for ten minutes together, as I told my stories; and I think the Doctor had a serious conversation with my mother on the matter; for she said, "He has reason. The boy shall not go any more. We will try and have *one* honest man in the family."

Go any more *where*? Now I will tell you (and I am much more ashamed of this than of the barber's pole, Monsieur mon fils, that I can promise you). When I was boarding at the grocer's at Rye, I and other boys were constantly down at the water, and we learned to manage a boat pretty early. Rudge did not go out himself, being rheumatic and lazy, but his apprentice would be absent frequently all night; and on more than one occasion I went out as odd boy in the boat to put my hand to anything.

Those pigeons I spoke of anon came from Boulogne. When one arrived he brought a signal that our Boulogne correspondent was on his way, and we might be on the look-out. The French boat would make for a point agreed upon, and we lay off until she came. We took cargo from her: barrels without number, I remember. Once we saw her chased away by a revenue-cutter. Once the same ship fired at us. I did not know what the balls were, which splashed close alongside of us; but I remember the apprentice of Rudge's (he used to make love to Miss R., and married her afterwards) singing out, "Lord, have mercy!" in an awful consternation, and the Chevalier crying out, "Hold your tongue, *misérable*! You were never born to be drowned or shot." He had some hesitation about taking me out on this expedition. He was engaged in running smuggled goods, that is the fact; and "smuggler" was the word which Doctor Barnard whispered in my grandfather's ear. If we were hard pressed at certain points which we knew, and could ascertain by cross-bearings which we took, we would sink our kegs till a more convenient time, and then return and drag for them, and bring them up with line and grapnel.

I certainly behaved much better when we were fired at, than that oaf of a Bevil, who lay howling his "Lord have mercy upon us!" at the bottom of the boat; but somehow the Chevalier discouraged my juvenile efforts in the smuggling

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line, from his fear of that unlucky tongue of mine, which would blab everything I knew. I may have been out *a-fishing* half-a-dozen times in all, but especially after we had been fired at, La Motte was for leaving me at home. My mother was averse, too, to my becoming a seaman (a smuggler) by profession. Her aim was to make a gentleman of me, she said, and I am most unfeignedly thankful to her for her keeping me out of mischief's way. Had I been permitted to herd along with the black sheep, Doctor Barnard would never have been so kind to me as he was; and indeed that good man showed me the greatest favour. When I came home from school he would often have me to the Rectory, and hear me my lessons, and he was pleased to say I was a lively boy of good parts.

The Doctor received rents for his college at Oxford, which has considerable property in these parts, and twice a year would go to London and pay the moneys over. In my boyish times these journeys to London were by no means without danger; and if you will take a *Gentleman's Magazine* from the shelf you will find a highway robbery or two in every month's chronicle. We boys at school were never tired of talking of highwaymen and their feats. As I often had to walk over to Rye from home of a night (so as to be in time for early morning school), I must needs buy a little brass-barrelled pistol, with which I practised in secret, and which I had to hide, lest Mother or Rudge, or the schoolmaster, should take it away from me. Once as I was talking with a schoolfellow, and vapouring about what we would do, were we attacked, I fired my pistol, and shot away a piece of his coat. I might have hit his stomach, not his coat—Heaven be good to us!—and this accident made me more careful in the use of my artillery. And now I used to practise with small shot instead of bullets, and pop at sparrows whenever I could get a chance.

At Michaelmas, in the year 1776 (I promise you I remember the year), my dear and kind friend, Doctor Barnard, having to go to London with his rents, proposed to take me to London to see my other patron, Sir Peter Denis, between whom and the Doctor there was a great friendship; and it is to those dear friends that I owe the great good fortune which has befallen me in life. Indeed, when I think of what I might

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have been, and of what I have escaped, my heart is full of thankfulness for the great mercies which have fallen to my share. Well, at this happy and eventful Michaelmas of 1776, Doctor Barnard says to me, "Denis, my child, if thy mother will grant leave, I have a mind to take thee to see thy godfather, Sir Peter Denis, in London. I am going up with my rents, my neighbour Weston will share the horses with me, and thou shalt see the Tower and Mrs. Salmon's waxwork before thou art a week older."

You may suppose that this proposition made Master Denis Duval jump for joy. Of course I had heard of London all my life, and talked with people who had been there, but that I should go myself to Admiral Sir Peter Denis's house, and see the play, Saint Paul's, and Mrs. Salmon's, here was a height of bliss I never had hoped to attain. I could not sleep for thinking of my pleasure; I had some money, and I promised to buy as many toys for Agnes as the Chevalier used to bring her. My mother said I should go like a gentleman, and turned me out in a red waistcoat with plate buttons, a cock to my hat, and ruffles to my shirts. How I counted the hours of the night before our departure! I was up before the dawn packing my little valise. I got my little brass-barrelled pocket-pistol, and I loaded it with shot. I put it away into my breast-pocket; and if we met with a highwayman I promised myself he should have my charge of lead in his face. The Doctor's postchaise was at his stables not very far from us. The stable lanterns were alight, and Brown, the Doctor's man, cleaning the carriage, when Mr. Denis Duval comes up to the stable door, lugging his portmanteau after him through the twilight. Was ever daylight so long a-coming? Ah! there come the horses at last; the horses from the "King's Head," and old Pascoe, the one-eyed postilion. How well I remember the sound of their hoofs in that silent street! I can tell everything that happened on that day: what we had for dinner—viz., veal cutlets, and French beans, at Maidstone; where we changed horses, and the colour of the horses. "Here, Brown! Here's my portmanteau! I say, where shall I stow it?" My portmanteau was about as large as a good-sized apple-pie. I jump into the carriage and

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we drive up to the Rectory; and I think the Doctor will never come out. There he is at last: with his mouth full of buttered toast, and I bob my head to him a hundred times out of the chaise window. Then I must jump out, forsooth. "Brown, shall I give you a hand with the luggage?" says I, and I dare say they all laugh. Well, I am so happy that anybody may laugh who likes. The Doctor comes out, his precious box under his arm. I see dear Mrs. Barnard's great cap nodding at us out of the parlour window as we drive away from the Rectory door to stop a hundred yards farther on at the Priory.

There at the parlour window stands my dear little Agnes, in a white frock, in a great cap with a blue riband and bow, and curls clustering over her face. I wish Sir Joshua Reynolds had painted thee in those days, my dear; but thou wert the very image of one of his little ladies, that one who became Duchess of Buccleuch afterwards. There is my Agnes, and now presently comes out Mr. Weston's man and luggage, and it is fixed on the roof. Him, his master, Mr. George Weston, follows. This was the most good-natured of the two, and I shall never forget my sensation of delight, when I saw him bring out two holster-pistols, which he placed each in a pocket of the chaise. Is Tommy Chapman, the apothecary's son of Westgate, alive yet, and does he remember my wagging my head to him as our chaise whirled by? He was shaking a mat at the door of his father's shop as my lordship accompanied by my noble friends passed by.

First stage, Ham Street, "The Bear." A grey horse and a bay to change, *I* remember them. Second stage, Ashford. Third stage——I think I am asleep about the third stage; and no wonder, a poor little wretch who had been awake half the night before, and no doubt many nights previous, thinking of this wonderful journey. Fourth stage, Maidstone, "The Bell." "And here we will stop to dinner, Master Shrimpcatcher," says the Doctor, and I jump down out of the carriage nothing loth. The Doctor followed with his box, of which he never lost sight.

The Doctor liked his ease in his inn, and took his sip of punch so comfortably, that I, for my part, thought he never would be gone. I was out in the stables and looking at the

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horses, and talking to the ostler who was rubbing his nags down. I dare say I had a peep into the kitchen, and at the pigeons in the inn yard, and at all things which were to be seen at "The Bell," while my two companions were still at their interminable punch. It was an old-fashioned inn, with a gallery round the courtyard. Heaven bless us! Falstaff and Bardolph may have stopped there on the road to Gadshill. I was in the stable looking at the nags, when Mr. Weston comes out of the inn, looks round the court, opens the door of the postchaise, takes out his pistols, looks at the priming, and puts them back again. Then we are off again, and time enough too. It seemed to me many hours since we had arrived at that creaking old "Bell." And away we go through Addington, Eynesford, by miles and miles of hop-gardens. I dare say I did not look at the prospect much, beautiful though it might be, my young eyes being for ever on the look-out for Saint Paul's and London.

For a great part of the way Doctor Barnard and his companion had a fine controversy about their respective religions, for which each was alike zealous. Nay: it may be the Rector invited Mr. Weston to take a place in his postchaise in order to have this battle, for he never tired of arguing the question between the two Churches. Towards the close of the day Master Denis Duval fell asleep on Doctor Barnard's shoulder, and the good-natured clergyman did not disturb him.

I woke up with the sudden stoppage of the carriage. The evening was falling. We were upon a lonely common, and a man on horseback was at the window of the postchaise.

"Give us out that there box! and your money!" I heard him say in a very gruff voice. O heavens! we were actually stopped by a highwayman! It was delightful.

Mr. Weston jumped at his pistols very quick. "Here's our money, you scoundrel!" says he, and fired point-blank at the rogue's head. Confusion! The pistol missed fire. He aimed the second, and again no report followed!

"Some scoundrel has been tampering with these," says Mr. Weston, aghast.

"Come," says Captain Macheath, "come, your——"

But the next word the fellow spoke was a frightful oath;

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for I took out my little pistol, which was full of shot, and fired it into his face. The man reeled, and I thought would have fallen out of his saddle. The postilion, frightened no doubt, clapped spurs to his horse, and began to gallop. "Shan't we stop and take that rascal, sir?" said I to the Doctor. On which Mr. Weston gave a peevish kind of push at me, and said, "No, no. It is getting quite dark. Let us push on." And, indeed, the highwayman's horse had taken fright, and we could see him galloping away across the common.

I was so elated to think that I, a little boy, had shot a live highwayman, that I dare say I bragged outrageously of my action. We set down Mr. Weston at his inn in the Borough, and crossed London Bridge, and there I was in London at last. Yes, and that was the Monument, and then we came to the Exchange, and yonder, yonder was Saint Paul's. We went up Holborn, and so to Ormond Street, where my patron lived in a noble mansion; and where his wife, my Lady Denis, received me with a great deal of kindness. You may be sure the battle with the highwayman was fought over again, and I got due credit from myself and others for my gallantry.

Sir Peter and his lady introduced me to a number of their acquaintances as the little boy who shot the highwayman. They received a great deal of company, and I was frequently had in to their dessert. I suppose I must own that my home was below in the housekeeper's room with Mrs. Jellicoe; but my Lady took such a fancy to me that she continually had me upstairs, took me out driving in her chariot, or ordered one of the footmen to take me to the sights of the town, and sent me in his charge to the play. It was the last year Garrick performed; and I saw him in the play of "Macbeth," in a gold-laced blue coat with scarlet plush waistcoat and breeches. Ormond Street, Bloomsbury, was on the outskirts of the town then, with open country behind, stretching as far as Hampstead. Bedford House, north of Bloomsbury Square, with splendid gardens, was close by, and Montague House, where I saw stuffed camelopards, and all sorts of queer things from foreign countries. Then there were the Tower, and the Wax-work, and Westminster Abbey, and Vauxhall. What a glorious

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week of pleasure it was! At the week's end the kind Doctor went home again, and all those dear kind people gave me presents, and cakes, and money, and spoilt the little boy who shot the highwayman.

The affair was actually put into the newspapers, and who should come to hear of it but my gracious Sovereign himself. One day, Sir Peter Denis took me to see Kew Gardens and the new Chinese pagoda Her Majesty had put up. Whilst walking here, and surveying this pretty place, I had the good fortune to see His M–j–sty, walking with our most gracious Qu—n, the Pr–nce of W—s, *the Bishop of Osnaburg*, my namesake, and, I think, two, or it may be three, of the Princesses. Her M–j–sty knew Sir Peter from having sailed with him, saluted him very graciously, and engaged him in conversation. And the Best of Monarchs, looking towards his humblest subject and servant, said, "What, what? Little boy shot the highwayman! Shot him in the face! Shot him in the face!" On which the youthful Pr–nces graciously looked towards me, and the King asking Sir Peter what my profession was to be, the Admiral said I hoped to be a sailor and serve His Majesty.

I promise you I was a mighty grand personage when I went home; and both at Rye and Winchelsea scores of people asked me what the King said. On our return, we heard of an accident which had happened to Mr. Joseph Weston, which ended most unhappily for that gentleman. On the very day when we set out for London he went out shooting —a sport of which he was very fond; but in climbing a hedge, and dragging his gun incautiously after him, the lock caught in a twig, and the piece discharged itself into the poor gentleman's face, lodging a number of shot into his left cheek, and into his eye, of which he lost the sight, after suffering much pain and torture.

"Bless my soul! A charge of small shot in his face! What an extraordinary thing!" cries Doctor Barnard, who came down to see Mother and Grandfather the day after our return home. Mrs. Barnard had told him of the accident at supper on the night previous. Had he been shot or shot someone himself, the Doctor could scarce have looked more scared.

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He put me in mind of Mr. Garrick, whom I had just seen at the playhouse, London, when he comes out after murdering the King.

"You look, Docteur, as if you done it yourself," says Monsieur de la Motte, laughing, and in his English jargon. "Two time, three time, I say, Weston, you shoot yourself, you carry you gun that way, and he say he not born to be shot, and he swear!"

"But, my good Chevalier, Doctor Blades picked some bits of crape out of his eye, and thirteen or fourteen shot. What is the size of your shot, Denny, with which you fired at the highwayman?"

"Quid autem vides festucam in oculo fratris tui, Doctor?" says the Chevalier; "that is good doctrine—Protestant or Popish, eh?" On which the Doctor held down his head, and said, "Chevalier, I am corrected; I was wrong—very wrong."

"And as for crape," La Motte resumed, "Weston is in mourning. He go to funeral at Canterbury four days ago. Yes, he tell me so. He and my friend Lütterloh go." This Mr. Lütterloh was a German living near Canterbury, with whom Monsieur de la Motte had dealings. He had dealings with all sorts of people; and very queer dealings, too, as I began to understand now that I was a stout boy approaching fourteen years of age, and standing pretty tall in my shoes.

De la Motte laughed then at the Doctor's suspicions. "Parsons and women all the same, save your respect, ma bonne Madame Duval; all tell tales; all believe evil of their neighbours. I tell you I see Weston shoot twenty, thirty time. Always drag his gun through hedge."

"But the crape——?"

"Bah! Always in mourning, Weston is! For shame of your *cancans*, little Denis! Never think such thing again. Don't make Weston your enemy. If a man say that of me, I would shoot him myself, *parbleu*!"

"But if he has done it?"

"*Parbleu!* I would shoot him so much ze mor!" says the Chevalier, with a stamp of his foot. And the first time he saw me alone he reverted to the subject. "Listen, Denisot!" says he: "thou becomest a great boy. Take my counsel, and

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hold thy tongue. This suspicion against Mr. Joseph is a monstrous crime, as well as a folly. A man say that of me—right or wrong—I burn him the brain. Once I come home, and you run against me, and I cry out, and swear and pest. I was wounded myself, I deny it not."

"And I said nothing, sir," I interposed.

"No, I do thee justice; thou didst say nothing. You know the *métier* we make sometimes? That night in the boat" ("*zat* night in *ze* boat," he used to say), "when the revenue cutter fire, and your poor camarade howl—ah, how he howl—you don't suppose we were there to look for lobstare-pot, eh? Tu n'as pas bronché, toi. You did not crane; you show yourself a man of heart. And now, petit, apprends à te taire!" And he gave me a shake of the hand, and a couple of guineas in it too, and went off to his stables on his business. He had two or three horses now, and was always on the trot; he was very liberal with his money, and used to have handsome entertainments in his upstairs room, and never quarrelled about the bills which Mother sent in. "Hold thy tongue, Denisot," said he. "Never tell who comes in or who goes out. And mind thee, child, if thy tongue wags, little birds come and whisper me, and say, 'He tell.'"

I tried to obey his advice, and to rein in that truant tongue of mine. When Doctor and Mrs. Barnard themselves asked me questions I was mum, and perhaps rather disappointed the good lady and the Rector too by my reticence. For instance, Mrs. Barnard would say, "That was a nice goose I saw going from market to your house, Denny."

"Goose is very nice, ma'am," says I.

"The Chevalier often has dinners?"

"Dines every day, regular, ma'am."

"Sees the Westons a great deal?"

"Yes, ma'am," I say, with an indescribable heart-pang. And the cause of that pang I may as well tell. You see, though I was only thirteen years old, and Agnes but eight, I loved that little maid with all my soul and strength. Boy or man I never loved any other woman. I write these very words by my study fire in Fareport with madam opposite dozing over her novel till the neighbours shall come in to tea

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and their rubber. When my ink is run out, and my little tale is written, and yonder church that is ringing to seven o'clock prayer shall toll for a certain D. D., you will please, good neighbours, to remember that I never loved any but yonder lady, and keep a place by Darby for Joan, when her turn shall arrive.

Now in the last year or two since she had been adopted at the Priory, Agnes came less and less often to see us. She did not go to church with us, being a Catholic. She learned from the good fathers her tutors. She learned music and French and dancing to perfection. All the country could not show a finer little lady. When she came to our shop, it was indeed a little countess honouring us with a visit. Mother was gentle before her—Grandfather obsequious—I, of course, her most humble little servant. Wednesday (a half-holiday), and half Saturday, and all Sunday I might come home from school, and how I used to trudge, and how I longed to see that little maiden, any gentleman may imagine who has lost his heart to an Agnes of his own.

The first day of my arrival at home, after the memorable London journey, I presented myself at the Priory, with my pocket full of presents for Agnes. The footman let me into the hall civilly enough: but the young lady was out with Mrs. Weston in the postchaise. I might leave my message.

I wanted to *give* my message. Somehow in that fortnight's absence from home, I had so got to long after Agnes that I never had my little sweetheart quite out of my mind. It may have been a silly thing, but I got a little pocket-book and wrote in French a journal of all I saw in London. I dare say there were some petty faults in grammar. I remember a fine paragraph about my meeting the Royal personages at Kew, and all their names written down in order; and this little pocket-book I must needs send to Mademoiselle de Saverne.

The next day I called again. Still Mademoiselle de Saverne was not to be seen: but in the evening a servant brought a little note from her, in which she thanked her dear brother for his beautiful book. That was some consolation. She liked the pocket-book, anyhow. I wonder, can you young people guess what I did to it before I sent it away? Yes, I did.

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"One, tree, feefty time," as the Chevalier would say. The next morning, quite early, I had to go back to school, having promised the Doctor to work hard after my holiday; and work I did with a will, at my French and my English, and my Navigation. I thought Saturday would never come: but it did at last, and I trotted as quick as legs would carry me from school to Winchelsea. My legs were growing apace now; and especially as they took me homewards, few could outrun them.

All good women are match-makers at heart. My dear Mrs. Barnard saw quite soon what my condition of mind was, and was touched by my boyish fervour. I called once, twice, thrice, at the Priory, and never could get a sight of Miss Agnes. The servant used to shrug his shoulders and laugh at me in an insolent way, and the last time said—"You need not call any more. We don't want our hair cut here, nor no pomatum, nor no soap, do you understand that?" and he slammed the door in my face. I was stunned by this insolence, and beside myself with rage and mortification. I went to Mrs. Barnard, and told her what had happened to me. I burst into tears of passion and grief as I flung myself on a sofa by the good lady. I told her how I had rescued little Agnes, how I loved the little thing better than all the world. I spoke my heart out, and eased it somewhat, for the good lady wiped her eyes more than once, and finished by giving me a kiss. She did more; she invited me to tea with her on the next Wednesday when I came home from school, and who should be there but little Agnes. She blushed very much. Then she came towards me. Then she held up her little cheek to be kissed, and then she cried—oh, how she did cry! There were three people whimpering in that room. (How well I recollect it opening into the garden, and the little old blue dragon teacups and silver pot!) There were three persons, I say, crying: a lady of fifty, a boy of thirteen, and a little girl of eight years of age. Can you guess what happened next? Of course the lady of fifty remembered that she had forgotten her spectacles, and went upstairs to fetch them; and then the little maiden began to open her heart to me, and told her dear Denny how she had been longing to see him,

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and how they were very angry with him at the Priory; so angry that his name was never to be spoken. "The Chevalier said that, and so did the gentlemen—especially Mr. Joseph, who had been dreadful since his accident, and one day (says my dear) when you called, he was behind the door with a great horsewhip, and said he would let you in, and flog your soul out of your body, only Mrs. Weston cried, and Mr. George said, 'Don't be a fool, Joe!' But something you have done to Mr. Joseph, dear Denny, and when your name is mentioned, he rages and swears so that it is dreadful to hear him. What can make the gentleman so angry with you?"

"So he actually was waiting with a horsewhip, was he? In that case I know what I would do. I would never go about without my pistol. I have hit one fellow," said I, "and if any other man threatens me I will defend myself."

My dear Agnes said that they were very kind to her at the Priory, although she could not bear Mr. Joseph—that they gave her good masters, that she was to go to a good school kept by a Catholic lady at Arundel. And oh, how she wished her Denny would turn Catholic, and she prayed for him always, always! And for that matter I know someone who never night or morning on his knees has forgotten that little maiden. The father used to come and give her lessons three or four times in the week, and she used to learn her lessons by heart, walking up and down in the great green walk in the kitchen-garden every morning at eleven o'clock. I knew the kitchen-garden! the wall was in North Lane, one of the old walls of the convent: at the end of the green walk there was a pear-tree. And that was where she always went to learn her lessons.

And here, I suppose, Mrs. Barnard returned to the room, having found her spectacles. And as I take mine off my nose and shut my eyes, that well-remembered scene of boyhood passes before them—that garden basking in the autumn evening—that little maiden with peachy cheeks, and glisten ing curls, that dear and kind old lady, who says, "'Tis time now, children, you should go home."

I had to go to school that night; but before I went I ran up North Lane and saw the old wall and the pear-tree behind

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it. And do you know I thought I would try and get up the wall, and easy enough it was to find a footing between those crumbling old stones; and when on the top I could look down from the branches of the tree into the garden below, and see the house at the farther end. So that was the broad walk where Agnes learned her lessons? Master Denis Duval pretty soon had that lesson by heart.

Yes: but one day in the Christmas holidays, when there was a bitter frost, and the stones and the wall were so slippery that Mr. D. D. tore his fingers and his small-clothes in climbing to his point of observation, it happened that little Agnes was *not* sitting under the tree learning her lessons, and none but an idiot would have supposed that she would have come out on such a day.

But who should be in the garden, pacing up and down the walk all white with hoar-frost, but Joseph Weston with his patch over his eye. Unluckily he had one eye left with which he saw me, and the next moment I heard the *report* of a tremendous oath, and then a brickbat came whizzing at my head, so close that, had it struck me, it would have knocked out my eye, and my brains too.

I was down the wall in a moment: it was slippery enough; and two or three more brickbats came *à mon adresse*, but luckily failed to hit their mark.

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CHAPTER VI.

I ESCAPE FROM A GREAT DANGER.

I SPOKE of the affair of the brickbats, at home, to Monsieur de la Motte only, not caring to tell Mother, lest she should be inclined to resume her box-on-the-ear practice, for which I thought I was growing too old. Indeed, I had become a great boy. There were not half-a-dozen out of the sixty at Pocock's who could beat me when I was thirteen years old, and from these champions, were they ever so big, I never would submit to a thrashing, without a fight on my part, in which, though I might get the worst, I was pretty sure to leave some ugly marks on my adversary's nose and eyes. I remember one lad especially, Tom Parrot by name, who was three years older than myself, and whom I could no more beat than a frigate can beat a seventy-four; but we *engaged* nevertheless, and, after we had had some rounds together, Tom put one hand in his pocket, and, with a queer face and a great

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black eye I had given him, says,—"Well, Denny, I could do it—you know I could: but I'm so lazy, I don't care about going on." And one of the bottle-holders beginning to jeer, Tom fetches him such a rap on the ear, that I promise you he showed no inclination for laughing afterwards. By the way, that knowledge of the noble art of fisticuffs which I learned at school, I had to practise at sea presently, in the cockpit of more than one of His Majesty's ships of war.

In respect of the slapping and caning at home, I think Monsieur de la Motte remonstrated with my mother, and represented to her that I was now too old for that kind of treatment. Indeed, when I was fourteen, I was as tall as Grandfather, and in a tussle I am sure I could have tripped his old heels up easily enough, and got the better of him in five minutes. Do I speak of him with undue familiarity? I pretend no love for him; I never could have any respect. Some of his practices which I knew of made me turn from him, and his loud professions only increased my distrust. *Monsieur mon fils*, if ever you marry, and have a son, I hope the little chap will have an honest man for a grandfather, and that you will be able to say, "I loved him," when the daisies cover me.

La Motte, then, caused "the abolition of torture" in our house, and I was grateful to him. I had the queerest feelings towards that man. He was a perfect fine gentleman when he so wished: of his money most liberal, witty (in a dry *cruel* sort of way)—most tenderly attached to Agnes. *Eh bien!* As I looked at his yellow handsome face, cold shudders would come over me, though at this time I did not know that Agnes's father had fallen by his fatal hand.

When I informed him of Mr. Joe Weston's salute of brickbats, he looked very grave. And I told him then, too, a thing which had struck me most forcibly—viz. that the shout which Weston gave, and the oath which he uttered when he saw me on the wall, were precisely like the oath and execration uttered by *the man with the craped face*, at whom I fired from the postchaise.

"*Bah, bêtise!*" says La Motte. "What didst thou on the wall? One does not steal pears at thy age."

I dare say I turned red. "I heard somebody's voice," I

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said. "In fact, I heard Agnes singing in the garden, and—and I got on the wall to see her."

"What, you—you, a little barber's boy, climb a wall to speak to Mademoiselle Agnes de Saverne, of one of the most noble houses of Lorraine?" La Motte yelled, with a savage laugh. "*Parbleu!* Monsieur Weston has well done!"

"Sir!" said I, in a towering rage, "barber as I am, my fathers were honourable Protestant clergymen in Alsace, and we are as good as highwaymen at any rate! Barber, indeed!" I say again. "And now I am ready to *swear* that the man who swore at me, and the man I shot on the road, are one and the same; and I'll go to Doctor Barnard's, and swear it before him!"

The Chevalier looked aghast, and threatening for awhile. "Tu me menaces, je crois, petit manant!" says he, grinding his teeth. "This is too strong. Listen, Denis Duval! Hold thy tongue, or evil will come to thee. Thou wilt make for thyself enemies the most unscrupulous, and the most terrible—do you hear? I have placed Mademoiselle Agnes de Saverne with that admirable woman, Mistress Weston, because she can meet at the Priory with society more fitting her noble birth than that which she will find under you grandfather's pole—parbleu. Ah, you dare mount on wall to look for Mademoiselle de Saverne? Gare aux manstraps, mon garçon! Vive Dieu, if I see thee on that wall I will fire on thee, moi le premier! *You* pretend to Mademoiselle Agnes. Ha! ha! ha!" and he grinned and looked like that *cloven*-footed gentleman of whom Doctor Barnard talked.

I felt that henceforward there was war between La Motte and me. At this time I had suddenly shot up to be a young man, and was not the obedient prattling child of last year. I told Grandfather that I would bear no more punishment, such as the old man had been accustomed to bestow upon me; and once when my mother lifted her hand, I struck it up, and griped it so tight that I frightened her. From that very day she never raised a hand to me. Nay, I think she was not ill pleased, and soon actually began to spoil me. Nothing was too good for me. I know where the silk came from

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which made my fine new waistcoat, and the cambric for my ruffled shirts, but very much doubt whether they ever paid any duty. As I walked to church, I dare say I cocked my hat, and strutted very consequentially. When Tom Billis, the baker's boy, jeered at my fine clothes, "Tom," says I, "I will take my coat and waistcoat off for half-an-hour on Monday, and give thee a beating if thou hast a mind; but to-day let us be at peace, and go to church."

On the matter of church I am not going to make any boast. That awful subject lies between a man and his conscience. I have known men of lax faith pure and just in their lives, as I have met very loud-professing Christians loose in their morality, and hard and unjust in their dealings. There was a little old man at home—Heaven help him!—who was of this sort, and who, when I came to know his life, would put me into such a rage of revolt whilst preaching his daily and nightly sermons, that it is a wonder I was not enlisted among the scoffers and evil-doers altogether. I have known many a young man fall away, and become utterly reprobate, because the bond of discipline was tied too tightly upon him, and because he has found the preacher who was perpetually prating over him lax in his own conduct. I am thankful, then, that I had a better instructor than my old grandfather with his strap and his cane; and was brought (I hope and trust) to a right state of thinking by a man whose brain was wise, as his life was excellently benevolent and pure. This was my good friend Doctor Barnard, and to this day I remember the conversations I had with him, and am quite sure they influenced my future life. Had I been altogether reckless and as lawless as many people of our acquaintance and neighbourhood, he would have ceased to feel any interest in me; and instead of wearing His Majesty's epaulets (which I trust I have not disgraced), I might have been swabbing a smuggler's boat, or riding in a night caravan, with kegs beside me and pistols and cutlasses to defend me, as that unlucky La Motte owned for his part that he had done. My good mother, though she gave up the practice of smuggling, never could see the harm in it; but looked on it as a game where you played your stake, and lost or won it.

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She ceased to play, not because it was wrong, but it was expedient no more; and Mr. Denis, her son, was the cause of her giving up this old trade.

For me, I thankfully own that I was taught to see the matter in a graver light, not only by our Doctor's sermons (two or three of which, on the text of "Render unto Cæsar," he preached, to the rage of a great number of his congregation), but by many talks which he had with me; when he showed me that I was in the wrong to break the laws of my country to which I owed obedience, as did every good citizen. He knew (though he never told me, and his reticence in this matter was surely very kind) that my poor father had died of wounds received in a smuggling encounter; but he showed me how such a life must be loose, lawless, secret, and wicked; must bring a man amongst desperate companions, and compel him to resist Cæsar's lawful authority by rebellion, and possibly murder. "To thy mother I have used other arguments, Denny, my boy," he said, very kindly. "I and the Admiral want to make a gentleman of thee. Thy old grandfather is rich enough to help us if he chooses. I won't stop to inquire too strictly where all his money came from; * but 'tis clear we cannot make a gentleman of a smuggler's boy, who may be transported any day, or, in case of armed resistance, may be——" And here my good Doctor puts his hand to his ear, and indicates the punishment for piracy which was very common in my young time. "My Denny does not want to ride with a crape over his face, and fire pistols at revenue officers! No! I pray you will ever show an honest countenance to the world. You will render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and—the rest, my child, you know."

Now, I remarked about this man, that when he approached *a certain subject*, an involuntary awe came over him, and he hushed as it were at the very idea of that sacred theme. It was very different with poor Grandfather prating his sermons (and with some other pastors I have heard), who used this Name as familiarly as any other, and——but who am I to judge? and, my poor old Grandfather, is there any need at this distance of time that I should be picking out the *trabem*

* Eheu! where a part of it *went to*, I shall have to say presently.—D. D.

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in oculo tuo? . . . Howbeit, on that night, as I was walking home after drinking tea with my dear Doctor, I made a vow that I would strive henceforth to lead an honest life; that my tongue should speak the truth, and my hand should be sullied by no secret crime. And as I spoke I saw my dearest little maiden's light glimmering in her chamber, and the stars shining overhead, and felt—who could feel more bold and happy than I?

That walk schoolwards by West Street certainly was a *détour*. I might have gone a straighter road, but then I should not have seen *a certain window*: a little twinkling window in a gable of the Priory House, where the light used to be popped out at nine o'clock. T'other day, when we took over the King of France to Calais (His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence being in command), I must needs hire a postchaise from Dover, to look at that old window in the Priory House at Winchelsea. I went through the old tears, despairs, tragedies. I sighed as sentimentally, after forty years, as though the *infandi dolores* were fresh upon me, as though I were the schoolboy trudging back to his task, and taking a last look at his dearest joy. I used as a boy to try and pass that window at nine, and I know a prayer was said for the inhabitant of yonder chamber. She knew my holidays, and my hours of going to school and returning thence. If my little maid hung certain signals in that window (such as a flower, for example, to indicate all was well, a cross-curtain, and so forth), I hope she practised no very unjustifiable stratagems. We agreed to consider that she was a prisoner in the hands of the enemy; and we had few means of communication save these simple artifices, which are allowed to be fair in love and war. Monsieur de la Motte continued to live at our house, when his frequent affairs did not call him away thence; but, as I said, few words passed between us after that angry altercation already described, and he and I were never friends again.

He warned me that I had another enemy, and facts strangely confirmed the Chevalier's warning. One Sunday night, as I was going to school, a repetition of the brickbat assault was made upon me, and this time the smart cocked

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hat which Mother had given me came in for such a battering as effectually spoiled its modish shape. I told Doctor Barnard of this second attempt, and the good Doctor was not a little puzzled. He began to think that he was not so very wrong in espying a beam in Joseph Weston's eye. We agreed to keep the matter quiet, however; and a fortnight after, on another Sunday evening, as I was going on my accustomed route to school, whom should I meet but the Doctor and Mr. Weston walking together! A little way beyond the town gate there is a low wall round a field; and Doctor Barnard, going by this field *a quarter of an hour before my usual time for passing*, found Mr. Joseph Weston walking there behind the stone enclosure!

"Good-night, Denny," says the Doctor, when he and his companion met me; but surly Mr. Weston said nothing. "Have you had any more brickbats at your head, my boy?" the Rector continued.

I said I was not afraid. I had got a good pistol, and *a bullet* in it this time.

"He shot that scoundrel on the same day you were shot, Mr. Weston," says the Doctor.

"Did he?" growls the other.

"And your gun was loaded with the same-sized shot which Denis used to pepper *his* rascal," continues the Doctor. "I wonder if any of the crape went into the rascal's wound?"

"Sir," said Mr. Weston, with an oath, "what do you mean for to hint?"

"The very oath the fellow used whom Denny hit when your brother and I travelled together. I am sorry to hear you use the language of such scoundrels, Mr. Weston."

"If you dare to suspect me of anything unbecoming a gentleman, I'll have the law of you, Mr. Parson, that I will!" roars the other.

"Denis, mon garçon, tire ton pistolet de suite, et vise-moi bien cet homme-là," says the Doctor; and griping hold of Weston's arm, what does Doctor Barnard do but plunge his hand into Weston's pocket, and draw thence *another* pistol! He said afterwards he saw the brass butt sticking out of Weston's coat, as the two were walking together.

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"What!" shrieks Mr. Weston; "is that young miscreant to go about armed, and tell everybody he will murder me; and ain't I for to defend myself? I walk in fear of my life for him!"

"You seem to me to be in the habit of travelling with pistols, Mr. Weston, and you know when people pass sometimes with money in their postchaises."

"You scoundrel, you—you boy! I call you to witness the words this man have spoken. He have insulted me, and libelled me, and I'll have the *lor* on him as sure as I am born!" shouts the angry man.

"Very good, Mr. Joseph Weston," replied the other fiercely. "And I will ask Mr. Blades, the surgeon, to bring the shot which he took from your eye, and the scraps of crape adhering to your face, and we will go to *lor* as soon as you like!"

Again I thought with a dreadful pang how Agnes was staying in that man's house, and how this quarrel would more than ever divide her from me; for now she would not be allowed to visit the Rectory—the dear neutral ground where I sometimes hoped to see her.

Weston never went to law with the Doctor, as he threatened. Some awkward questions would have been raised, which he would have found a difficulty in answering: and though he averred that his accident took place on the day before our encounter with the *beau masque* on Dartford Common, a little witness on our side was ready to aver that Mr. Joe Weston left his house at the Priory before sunrise on the day when we took our journey to London, and that he returned the next morning with his eye bound up, when he sent for Mr. Blades, the surgeon of our town. Being awake, and looking from her window, my witness saw Weston mount his horse by the stable-lantern below, and heard him swear at the groom as he rode out at the gate. Curses used to drop naturally out of this nice gentleman's lips; and it is certain in his case that bad words and bad actions went together.

The Westons were frequently absent from home, as was the Chevalier our lodger. My dear little Agnes was allowed to come and see us at these times; or slipped out by the garden-door,

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and ran to see her nurse Duval, as she always called my mother. I did not understand for a while that there was any prohibition on the Westons' part to Agnes visiting us, or know that there was such mighty wrath harboured against me in that house.

I was glad, for the sake of a peaceable life at home, as for honesty's sake too, that my mother did not oppose my determination to take no share in that smuggling business in which our house still engaged. Anyone who opposed Mother in her own house had, I promise you, no easy time: but she saw that if she wished to make a gentleman of her boy, he must be no smuggler's apprentice; and when Monsieur le Chevalier, being appealed to, shrugged his shoulders and said he washed his hands of me: "*Eh bien*, Monsieur de la Motte!" says she, "we shall see if we can't pass ourselves of you and your patronage. I imagine that people are not always the better for it." "No," replied he, with a groan, and one of his gloomy looks, "my friendship may do people harm, but my enmity is worse—*entendez-vous*?" "Bah, bah!" says the stout old lady. "Denisot has a good courage of his own. What do you say to me about enmity to a harmless boy, Monsieur le Chevalier?"

I have told how, on the night of the funeral of Madame de Saverne, Monsieur de la Motte sent me out to assemble his Mackerel men. Among these was the father of one of my town playfellows, by name Hookham, a seafaring man, who had met with an accident at his business—strained his back—and was incapable of work for a time. Hookham was an improvident man; the rent got into arrears. My grandfather was his landlord, and I fear me, not the most humane creditor in the world. Now when I returned home after my famous visit to London, my patron, Sir Peter Denis, gave me two guineas, and my Lady made me a present of another. No doubt I should have spent this money had I received it sooner in London; but in our little town of Winchelsea there was nothing to tempt me in the shops, except a fowling-piece at the pawnbroker's, for which I had a great longing. But Mr. Triboulet wanted four guineas for the gun, and I had but three, and would not go into debt. He would have given me the piece on credit, and frequently tempted me with it, but

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I resisted manfully, though I could not help hankering about the shop, and going again and again to look at the beautiful gun. The stock fitted my shoulder to a nicety. It was of the most beautiful workmanship. "Why not take it now, Master Duval?" Monsieur Triboulet said to me: "and pay me the remaining guinea when you please. Ever so many gentlemen have been to look at it; and I should be sorry now, indeed I should, to see such a beauty go out of the town." As I was talking to Triboulet (it may have been for the tenth time), someone came in with a telescope to pawn, and went away with fifteen shillings. "Don't you know who that is?" says Triboulet (who was a chatterbox of a man). "That is John Hookham's wife. It is but hard times with them since John's accident. I have more of their goods here, and, *entre nous*, John has a hard landlord, and quarter-day is just at hand." I knew well enough that John's landlord was hard, as he was my own grandfather. "If I take my three pieces to Hookham," thought I, "he may find the rest of the rent." And so he did; and my three guineas went into my grandfather's pocket out of mine; and I suppose someone else bought the fowling-piece for which I had so longed.

"What, it is *you* who have given me this money, Master Denis?" says poor Hookham, who was sitting in his chair, groaning and haggard with his illness. "I can't take it—I ought not to take it."

"Nay," said I; "I should only have bought a toy with it, and if it comes to help you in distress, I can do without my plaything."

There was quite a chorus of benedictions from the poor family in consequence of this act of good-nature; and I dare say I went away from Hookham's mightily pleased with myself and my own virtue.

It appears I had not been gone long when Mr. Joe Weston came in to see the man, and when he heard that I had relieved him, broke out into a flood of abuse against me, cursed me for a scoundrel and impertinent jackanapes, who was always giving myself the airs of a gentleman, and flew out of the house in a passion. Mother heard of the transaction, too, and pinched my ear with a grim satisfaction. Grandfather said nothing,

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but pocketed my three guineas when Mrs. Hookham brought them; and, though I did not brag about the matter much, everything is known in a small town, and I got a great deal of credit for a very ordinary good action.

And now, strangely enough, Hookham's boy confirmed to me what the Slindon priests had hinted to good Doctor Barnard. "Swear," says Tom (with that wonderful energy we used to have as boys)—"Swear, Denis, 'So help you, strike you down dead!' you never will tell!"

"So help me, strike me down dead!" said I.

"Well, then, those—you know who—the gentlemen—want to do you some mischief."

"What mischief can they do to an honest boy?" I asked.

"Oh, you don't know what they are," says Tom. "If they mean a man harm, harm will happen to him. Father says no man ever comes to good who stands in Mr. Joe's way. Where's John Wheeler, of Rye, who had a quarrel with Mr. Joe? He's in gaol. Mr. Barnes, of Playden, had words with him at Hastings market: and Barnes's ricks were burnt down before six months were over. How was Thomas Berry taken, after deserting from the man-of-war? He is an awful man, Mr. Joe Weston is. Don't get into his way. Father says so. But you are not to tell—no, never—that he spoke about it. Don't go alone to Rye of nights, Father says. Don't go on any—and you know what—any *fishing* business, except with those you know." And so Tom leaves me with a finger to his lip and terror in his face.

As for the *fishing*, though I loved a sail dearly, my mind was made up by good Doctor Barnard's advice to me. I would have no more night-fishing such as I had seen sometimes as a boy; and when Rudge's apprentice one night invited me, and called me a coward for refusing to go, I showed him I was no coward as far as fisticuffs went, and stood out a battle with him, in which I do believe I should have proved conqueror, though the fellow was four years my senior, had not his ally, Miss Sukey Rudge, joined him in the midst of our fight, and knocked me down with the kitchen bellows, when they both belaboured me, as I lay kicking on the ground. Mr. Elder Rudge came in at the close of this

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dreadful combat, and his abandoned hussy of a daughter had the impudence to declare that the quarrel arose because I was rude to her—I, an innocent boy, who would as soon have made love to a negress as to that hideous, pock-marked, squinting, crooked, tipsy Sukey Rudge. I fall in love with Miss Squintum, indeed! I knew a pair of eyes at home so bright, innocent, and pure, that I should have been ashamed to look in them had I been guilty of such a rascally treason. My little maid of Winchelsea heard of this battle, as she was daily hearing slanders against me from those *worthy* Mr. Westons; but she broke into a rage at the accusation, and said to the assembled gentlemen (as she told my good mother in after days), "Denis Duval is *not* wicked. He is brave and he is good. And it is not true, the story you tell against him. It is a lie!"

And now, once more it happened that my little pistol helped to confound my enemies, and was to me, indeed, a *gute Wehr und Waffen*. I was for ever popping at marks with this little piece of artillery. I polished, oiled, and covered it with the utmost care, and kept it in my little room in a box of which I had the key. One day, by a most fortunate chance, I took my schoolfellow, Tom Parrot, who became a great crony of mine, into the room. We went upstairs, by the private door of Rudge's house, and not through the shop, where Mademoiselle Figs and Monsieur the apprentice were serving their customers; and arrived in my room, we boys opened my box, examined the precious pistol, screw, barrel, flints, powder-horn, &c., locked the box and went away to school, promising ourselves a good afternoon's sport on that half-holiday. Lessons over, I returned home to dinner, to find black looks from all the inmates of the house where I lived, from the grocer, his daughter, his apprentice, and even the little errand-boy who blacked the boots and swept the shop stared at me impertinently, and said, "Oh, Denis, ain't you going to catch it!"

"What is the matter?" I asked, very haughtily.

"Oh, my Lord! we'll soon show your Lordship what is the matter." (This was a silly nickname I had in the town and at school, where, I believe, I gave myself not a few airs since

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I had worn my fine new clothes, and paid my visit to London.) "This accounts for his laced waistcoat, and his guineas which he flings about. Does your Lordship know these here shillings, and this half-crown? Look at them, Mr. Beales! See the marks on them which I scratched with my own hand before I put them into the till from which my Lord took 'em."

Shillings?—till? What did they mean? "How dare you ask, you little hypocrite!" screams out Miss Rudge. "I marked them shillings and that half-crown with my own needle, I did; and of that I can take my Bible oath."

"Well, and what then?" I asked, remembering how this young woman had not scrupled to bear false witness in another charge against me.

"What then? They were in the till this morning, young fellow; and you know well enough where they were found afterwards," says Mr. Beales. "Come, come! This is a bad job. This is a sessions job, my lad."

"But where *were* they found?" again I asked.

"We'll tell you that before Squire Boroughs and the magistrates, you young vagabond!"

"You little viper, that have turned and stung me!"

"You precious young scoundrel!"

"You wicked little story-telling, good-for-nothing little thief!" cry Rudge, the apprentice, and Miss Rudge in a breath. And I stood bewildered by their outcry, and, indeed, not quite comprehending the charge which they made against me.

"The magistrates are sitting at the Town Hall now. We will take the little villain there at once," says the grocer. "You bring the box along with you, constable. Lord! Lord! what will his poor grandfather say?" And, wondering still at the charge made against me, I was made to walk through the streets to the Town Hall, passing on the way by at least a score of our boys, who were enjoying their half-holiday. It was market day, too, and the town full. It is forty years ago, but I dream about that dreadful day still; and, an old gentleman of sixty, fancy myself walking through Rye market, with Mr. Beales's fist clutching my collar!

A number of our boys joined this dismal procession, and

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accompanied me into the magistrates' room. "Denis Duval up for stealing money!" cries one. "This accounts for his fine clothes," sneers another. "He'll be hung," says a third. The market people stare, and crowd round, and jeer. I feel as if in a horrible nightmare. We pass under the pillars of the Market House, up the steps to the Town Hall, where the magistrates were, who chose market-day for their sittings.

How my heart throbbed, as I saw my dear Doctor Barnard seated among them.

"Oh, Doctor," cries poor Denis, clasping his hands, "*you* don't believe me guilty?"

"Guilty of what?" cries the Doctor, from the raised table round which the gentlemen sat.

"Guilty of stealing."

"Guilty of robbing my till."

"Guilty of taking two half-crowns, three shillings and twopence in copper, all marked," shriek out Rudge, the apprentice, and Miss Rudge in a breath.

"Denny Duval steal sixpences!" cries the Doctor; "I would as soon believe he stole the dragon off the church-steeple!"

"Silence, you boys! Silence in the court there; or flog 'em and turn 'em all out," says the magistrates' clerk. Some of our boys—friends of mine—who had crowded into the place, were hurraying at my kind Doctor Barnard's speech.

"It is a most serious charge," says the clerk.

"But what *is* the charge, my good Mr. Hickson? You might as well put me into the dock as that——"

"Pray, sir, will you allow the business of the court to go on?" asks the clerk testily. "Make your statement, Mr. Rudge, and don't be afraid of anybody. You are under the protection of the court, sir."

And now for the first time I heard the particulars of the charge made against me. Rudge, and his daughter after him, stated (on oath, I am shocked to say) that for some time past they had missed money from the till; small sums of money, in shillings and half-crowns, they could not say how much. It might be two pounds, three pounds, in all; but the money was constantly going. At last, Miss Rudge said, she was

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determined to mark some money, and did so; and that money was found in that box which belonged to Denis Duval, and which the constable brought into court.

"Oh, gentlemen!" I cried out in agony, "it's a wicked wicked lie, and it's not the first she has told about me. A week ago she said I wanted to kiss her, and she and Bevil both set on me; and I never wanted to kiss the nasty thing, so help me——"

"You did, you lying wicked boy!" cries Miss Sukey. "And Edward Bevil came to my rescue; and you struck me, like a low mean coward; and we beat him well and served him right, the little abandoned boy."

"And he kicked one of my teeth out—you did, you little villain!" roars Bevil, whose jaws had indeed suffered in that scuffle in the kitchen, when his precious sweetheart came to his aid with the bellows.

"He called me a coward, and I fought him fair, though he is ever so much older than me," whimpers out the prisoner. "And Sukey Rudge set upon me, and beat me too; and if I kicked him, he kicked me."

"And since this kicking match they have found out that you stole their money, have they?" says the Doctor, and turns round, appealing to his brother magistrates.

"Miss Rudge, please to tell the rest of your story," calls out the justices' clerk.

The rest of the Rudges' story was, that having their suspicions roused against me, they determined to examine my cupboards and boxes in my absence, to see whether the stolen objects were to be found, and in my box they discovered the two marked half-crowns, the three marked shillings, a brass-barrelled pistol, which were now in court. "Me and Mr. Bevil, the apprentice, found the money in the box; and we called my papa from the shop, and we fetched Mr. Beales, the constable, who lives over the way; and when the little monster came back from school, we seized upon him, and brought him before your worships, and hanging is what I said he would always come to," shrieks my enemy Miss Rudge.

"Why, I have the key of that box in my pocket now!" I cried out.

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EVIDENCE FOR THE DEFENCE.

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"We had means of opening it," says Miss Rudge, looking very red.

"Oh, if you have another key——" interposes the Doctor.

"We broke it open with the tongs and poker," says Miss Rudge, "me and Edward did—I mean Mr. Bevil, the apprentice."

"When?" said I, in a great tremor.

"When? When you was at school, you little miscreant! Half-an-hour before you came back to dinner."

"Tom Parrot, Tom Parrot!" I cried. "Call Tom Parrot, gentlemen. For goodness' sake call Tom!" I said, my heart beating so that I could hardly speak.

"Here I am, Denny," pipes Tom in the crowd; and presently he comes up to their honours on the bench.

"Speak to Tom, Doctor, dear Doctor Barnard!" I continued. "Tom, when did I show you my pistol?"

"Just before ten o'clock school."

"What did I do?"

"You unlocked your box, took the pistol out of a handkerchief, showed it to me, and two flints, a powder-horn, a bullet-mould, and some bullets, and put them back again, and locked the box."

"Was there any money in the box?"

"There was nothing in the box but the pistol, and the bullets and things. I looked into it. It was as empty as my hand."

"And Denis Duval has been sitting by you in school ever since?"

"Ever since—except when I was called up and caned for my Corderius," says Tom, with a roguish look; and there was a great laughter and shout of applause from our boys of Pocock's when this testimony was given in their schoolfellow's favour.

My kind Doctor held his hand over the railing to me, and when I took it, my heart was so full that my eyes overflowed. I thought of little Agnes. What would she have felt if her Denis had been committed as a thief? I had such a rapture of thanks and gratitude that I think the pleasure of the acquittal was more than equivalent to the anguish of the

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accusation. What a shout all Pocock's boys set up, as I went out of the justice-room! We trooped joyfully down the stairs, and there were fresh shouts and huzzays as we got down to the market. I saw Mr. Joe Weston buying corn at a stall, He only looked at me once. His grinding teeth and his clenched riding-whip did not frighten me in the least now.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE LAST OF MY SCHOOLDAYS.

AS our joyful procession of boys passed by Partlett's the pastrycook's, one of the boys—Samuel Arbin—I remember the fellow well—a greedy boy, with a large beard and whiskers, though only fifteen years old—insisted that I ought to stand treat in consequence of my victory over my enemies. As far as a groat went, I said I was ready: for that was all the money I had.

"Oh, you storyteller!" cries the other. "What have you done with your three guineas which you were bragging about and showing to the boys at school? I suppose they were in the box when it was broken open." This Samuel Arbin was one of the boys who had jeered when I was taken in charge by the constable, and would have liked me to be guilty, I almost think. I am afraid I had bragged about my money when I possessed it, and may have shown my shining gold pieces to some of the boys in school.

"I know what he has done with his money!" broke in my steadfast crony Tom Parrot. "He has given away every shilling of it to a poor family who wanted it, and nobody ever knew *you* give away a shilling, Samuel Arbin," he says.

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"Unless he could get eighteenpence by it!" sang out another little voice.

"Tom Parrot, I'll break every bone in your body, as sure as my name is Arbin!" cried the other, in a fury.

"Sam Arbin," said I, "after you have finished Tom, you must try me; or we'll do it now, if you like." To say the truth, I had long had an inclination to try my hand against Arbin. He was an ill friend to me, and amongst the younger boys a bully and a usurer to boot. The rest called out, "A ring! a ring! Let us go on the green and have it out!" being in their innocent years always ready for a fight.

But this one was never to come off: and (except in later days, when I went to revisit the old place, and ask for a half-holiday for my young successors at Pocock's) I was never again to see the ancient schoolroom. While we boys were brawling in the market-place before the pastrycook's door, Doctor Barnard came up, and our quarrel was hushed in a moment.

"What! fighting and quarrelling already?" says the Doctor, sternly.

"It wasn't Denny's fault, sir!" cried out several of the boys. "It was Arbin began." And, indeed, I can say for myself that in all the quarrels I have had in life—and they have not been few—I consider I *always* have been in the right.

"Come along with me, Denny," says the Doctor, taking me by the shoulder: and he led me away and we took a walk in the town together, and as we passed old Ypres Tower, which was built by King Stephen, they say, and was a fort in old days, but is used as the town-prison now, "Suppose you had been looking from behind those bars now, Denny, and awaiting your trial at assizes? Yours would not have been a pleasant plight," Doctor Barnard said.

"But I was innocent, sir! You know I was!"

"Yes. Praise be where praise is due. But if you had not providentially been able to prove your innocence—if you and your friend Parrot had not happened to inspect your box, you would have been in yonder place. Ha! there is the bell ringing for afternoon service, which my good friend Doctor Wing keeps up. What say you? Shall we go and—and—

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offer up our thanks, Denny—for the—the immense peril from which—you have been—delivered?"

I remember how my dear friend's voice trembled as he spoke, and two or three drops fell from his kind eyes on my hand, which he held. I followed him into the church. Indeed and indeed I was thankful for my deliverance from a great danger, and even more thankful to have the regard of the true gentleman, the wise and tender friend, who was there to guide, and cheer, and help me.

As we read the last psalm appointed for that evening service, I remember how the good man, bowing his own head, put his hand upon mine; and we recited together the psalm of thanks to the Highest, who had had respect unto the lowly, and who had stretched forth His hand upon the furiousness of my enemies, and whose right hand had saved me.

Doctor Wing recognised and greeted his comrade when service was over: and the one Doctor presented me to the other, who had been one of the magistrates on the bench at the time of my trial. Doctor Wing asked us into his house, where dinner was served at four o'clock, and of course the transactions of the morning were again discussed. What could be the reason of the persecution against me? Who instigated it? There were matters connected with this story regarding which I *could* not speak. Should I do so, I must betray secrets which were not mine, and which implicated I knew not whom, and regarding which I must hold my peace. Now, they are secrets no more. That old society of smugglers is dissolved long ago: nay, I shall have to tell presently how I helped myself to break it up. Grandfather, Rudge, the Chevalier, the gentlemen of the Priory, were all connected in that great smuggling society of which I have spoken; which had its depôts all along the coast and inland, and its correspondents from Dunkirk to Hâvre de Grace. I have said as a boy how I had been on some of these "fishing" expeditions; and how, mainly by the effect of my dear Doctor's advice, I had withdrawn from all participation in this lawless and wicked life. When Bevil called me coward for refusing to take a share in a night-cruise, a quarrel ensued between us, ending in that battle royal which left us all sprawling, and

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cuffing and kicking each other on the kitchen floor. Was it rage at the injury to her sweetheart's teeth, or hatred against myself, which induced my sweet Miss Sukey to propagate calumnies against me? The provocation I had given certainly did not seem to warrant such a deadly enmity as a prosecution and a perjury showed must exist. Howbeit, there was *a* reason for the anger of the grocer's daughter and apprentice. They would injure me in any way they could; and (as in the before-mentioned case of the bellows) take the first weapon at hand to overthrow me.

As magistrates of the county, and knowing a great deal of what was happening round about them, and the character of their parishioners and neighbours, the two gentlemen could not, then, press me too closely. Smuggled silk and lace, rum and brandy? Who had not these in his possession along the Sussex and Kent coast? "And, Wing, will you promise me there are no ribbons in your house but such as have paid duty?" asks one Doctor of the other.

"My good friend, it is lucky my wife has gone to her tea-table," replies Doctor Wing, "or I would not answer for the peace being kept."

"My dear Wing," continues Doctor Barnard, "this brandy punch is excellent, and is worthy of being smuggled. To run an anker of brandy seems no monstrous crime; but when men engage in these lawless ventures at all, who knows how far the evil will go? I buy ten kegs of brandy from a French fishing-boat, I land it under a lie on the coast, I send it inland ever so far, be it from here to York, and all my consignees lie and swindle. I land it, and lie to the revenue officer. Under a lie (that is, a mutual secresy) I sell it to the landlord of 'The Bell' at Maidstone, say—where a good friend of ours, Denny, looked at his pistols. You remember the day when his brother received the charge of shot in his face? My landlord sells it to a customer under a lie. We are all engaged in crime, conspiracy, and falsehood; nay, if the revenue looks too closely after us, we out with our pistols, and to crime and conspiracy add murder. Do you suppose men engaged in lying every day will scruple about a false oath in a witness-box? Crime engenders crime, sir. Round about *us*, Wing, I

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know there exists a vast confederacy of fraud, greed, and rebellion. I name no names, sir. I fear men high placed in the world's esteem, and largely endowed with its riches too, are concerned in the pursuit of this godless traffic of smuggling, and to what does it not lead them? To falsehood, to wickedness, to murder, to——"

"Tea, sir, if you please, sir," says John entering. "My mistress and the young ladies are waiting."

The ladies had previously heard the story of poor Denis Duval's persecution and innocence, and had shown him great kindness. By the time when we joined them after dinner, they had had time to perform a new toilette, being engaged to cards with some neighbours. I knew Mrs. Wing was a customer to my mother for some of her French goods, and she would scarcely, on an ordinary occasion, have admitted such a lowly guest to her table as the humble dressmaker's boy; but she and the ladies were very kind, and my persecution and proved innocence had interested them in my favour.

"You have had a long sitting, gentlemen," says Mrs. Wing: "I suppose you have been deep in politics, and the quarrel with France."

"We have been speaking of France and French goods, my dear," said Doctor Wing drily.

"And of the awful crime of smuggling and encouraging smuggling, my dear Mrs. Wing!" cries my Doctor.

"Indeed, Doctor Barnard!" Now Mrs. Wing and the young ladies were dressed in smart new caps, and ribbons, which my poor mother supplied; and *they* turned red, and I turned as red as the cap-ribbons, as I thought how my good ladies had been provided. No wonder Mrs. Wing was desirous to change the subject of conversation.

"What is this young man to do after his persecution?" she asked. "He can't go back to Mr. Rudge—that horrid Wesleyan who has accused him of stealing."

No, indeed, I could not go back. We had not thought about the matter until then. There had been a hundred things to agitate and interest me in the half-dozen hours since my apprehension and dismissal.

The Doctor would take me to Winchelsea in his chaise.

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I could not go back to my persecutors, that was clear, except to reclaim my little property and my poor little boxes, which they had found means to open. Mrs. Wing gave me a hand, the young ladies a stately curtsey; and my good Doctor Barnard putting a hand under the arm of the barber's grandson, we quitted these kind people. I was not on the quarterdeck as yet, you see. I was but a humble lad belonging to ordinary tradesmen.

By the way, I had forgotten to say that the two clergymen, during their after-dinner talk, had employed a part of it in examining me as to my little store of learning at school, and my future prospects. Of Latin I had a smattering; French, owing to my birth, and mainly to Monsieur de la Motte's instruction and conversation, I could speak better than either of my two examiners, and with quite the good manner and conversation. I was well advanced, too, in arithmetic and geometry; and Dampier's Voyages were as much my delight as those of Sinbad or my friends Robinson Crusoe and Man Friday. I could pass a good examination in navigation and seamanship, and could give an account of the different sailings, working-tides, double-altitudes, and so forth.

"And you can manage a boat at sea, too?" says Doctor Barnard, drily. I blushed, I suppose. I *could* do that, and could steer, reef, and pull an oar. At least I could do so two years ago.

"Denny, my boy," says my good Doctor, "I think 'tis time for thee to leave this school, at any rate, and that our friend Sir Peter must provide for thee."

However he may desire to improve in learning, no boy, I fancy, is very sorry when a proposal is made to him to leave school. I said that I should be too glad if Sir Peter, my patron, would provide for me. With the education I had, I ought to get on, the Doctor said, and my grandfather he was sure would find the means for allowing me to appear like a gentleman.

To fit a boy for appearance on the quarterdeck, and to enable him to rank with others, I had heard would cost thirty or forty pounds a year at least. I asked, did Doctor Barnard think my grandfather could afford such a sum?

"I know not your grandfather's means," Doctor Barnard

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answered, smiling. "He keeps his own counsel. But I am very much mistaken, Denny, if he cannot afford to make you a better allowance than many a fine gentleman can give his son. I believe him to be rich. Mind, I have no precise reason for my belief; but I fancy, Master Denis, your good Grandpapa's *fishing* has been very profitable to him."

How rich was he? I began to think of the treasures in my favourite "Arabian Nights." Did Doctor Barnard think Grandfather was *very* rich? Well—the Doctor could not tell. The notion in Winchelsea was that old Mr. Peter was very well-to-do. At any rate I must go back to him. It was impossible that I should stay with the Rudge family after the insulting treatment I had had from them. The Doctor said he would take me home with him in his chaise, if I would pack my little trunks; and with this talk we reached Rudge's shop, which I entered not without a beating heart. There was Rudge glaring at me from behind his desk, where he was posting his books. The apprentice looked daggers at me as he came up through a trap-door from the cellar with a string of dip-candles; and my charming Miss Susan was behind the counter tossing up her ugly head.

"Ho! he's come back, have he?" says Miss Rudge. "As all the cupboards is locked in the parlour, you can go in, and get your tea there, young man."

"I am going to take Denis home, Mr. Rudge," said my kind Doctor. "He cannot remain with you, after the charge which you made against him this morning."

"Of having our marked money in his box? Do you go for to dare for to say we put it there?" cries Miss, glaring now at me, now at Doctor Barnard. "Go to say that! Please to say that once, Doctor Barnard, before Mrs. Barker and Mrs. Scales" (these were two women who happened to be in the shop purchasing goods). "Just be so good for to say before these ladies, that we have put the money in that boy's box, and we'll see whether there is not justice in Hengland for a poor girl whom you insult, because you are a doctor and a magistrate indeed! Eh, if I was a man, I wouldn't let some people's gowns, and cassocks, and bands, remain long on their backs—that I wouldn't. And some people wouldn't

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see a woman insulted if they wasn't cowards!" As she said this, Miss Sukey looked at the cellar-trap, above which the apprentice's head had appeared, but the Doctor turned also towards it with a glance so threatening, that Bevil let the trap fall suddenly down, not a little to my Doctor's amusement.

"Go and pack thy trunk, Denny. I will come back for thee in half-an-hour. Mr. Rudge must see that after being so insulted as you have been, you never as a gentleman can stay in this house."

"A pretty gentleman, indeed!" ejaculates Miss Rudge. "Pray how long since was barbers gentlemen, I should like to know? Mrs. Scales mum, Mrs. Barker mum,—did you ever have your hair dressed by a gentleman? If you want for to have it, you must go to Mounseer Duval, at Winchelsea, which one of the name was hung, Mrs. Barker mum, for a thief and a robber, and he won't be the last neither!"

There was no use in bandying abuse with this woman. "I will go and get my trunk, and be ready, sir," I said to the Doctor; but his back was no sooner turned than the raging virago opposite me burst out with a fury of words, that I certainly can't remember after five-and-forty years. I fancy I see now the little green eyes gleaming hatred at me, the lean arms akimbo, the feet stamping as she hisses out every imaginable imprecation at my poor head.

"Will no man help me, and stand by and see that barber's boy insult me?" she cried. "Bevil, I say—Bevil! 'Elp me!"

I ran upstairs to my little room, and was not twenty minutes in making up my packages. I had passed years in that little room, and somehow grieved to leave it. The odious people had injured me, and yet I would have liked to part friends with them. I had passed delightful nights there in the company of Robinson Crusoe, Mariner, and Monsieur Galland and his Contes Arabes, and Hector of Troy, whose adventures and lamentable death (out of Mr. Pope) I could recite by heart; and I had had weary nights, too, with my school-books, cramming that crabbed Latin grammar into my puzzled brain. With arithmetic, logarithms, and mathematics I have said I was more familiar. I took a pretty good place

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in our school with them, and ranked before many boys of greater age.

And now my boxes being packed (my little library being stowed away in that which contained my famous pistol), I brought them downstairs, with nobody to help me, and had them in the passage ready against Doctor Barnard's arrival. The passage is behind the back shop at Rudge's—(dear me! how well I remember it!) and a door thence leads into a side street. On the other side of this passage is the kitchen, where had been the fight which has been described already, and where we commonly took our meals.

I declare I went into that kitchen disposed to part friends with all these people—to forgive Miss Sukey her lies, and Bevil his cuffs, and all the past quarrels between us. Old Rudge was by the fire, having his supper; Miss Sukey opposite to him. Bevil, as yet, was minding the shop.

"I am come to shake hands before going away," I said.

"You're a-going, are you? And pray, sir, wherehever are you a-going of?" says Miss Sukey over her tea.

"I am going home with Doctor Barnard. I can't stop in this house after you have accused me of stealing your money."

"Stealing! Wasn't the money in your box, you little beastly thief?"

"Oh, you young reprobate, I am surprised the bears don't come in and eat you," groans old Rudge. "You have shortened my life with your wickedness, that you have; and if you don't bring your good grandfather's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, I shall be surprised, that I shall. You, who come of a pious family—I tremble when I think of you, Denis Duval!"

"Tremble! Faugh! the wicked little beast! he makes me sick, he do!" cries Miss Sukey, with looks of genuine loathing.

"Let him depart from among us!" cries Rudge.

"Never do I wish to see his ugly face again!" exclaims the gentle Susan.

"I am going as soon as Doctor Barnard's chaise comes," I said. "My boxes are in the passage now, ready packed."

"Ready packed, are they? Is there any more of our

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money in them, you little miscreant? Pa, is your silver tankard in the cupboard, and is the spoons safe?"

I think poor Sukey had been drinking to drive away the mortifications of the morning in the court-house. She became more excited and violent with every word she spoke, and shrieked and clenched her fists at me like a madwoman.

"Susanna, you have had false witness bore against you, my child; and you are not the first of your name. But be calm, be calm; it's our duty to be calm!"

"Eh!" (here she gives a grunt). "Calm with that sneak —that pig—that liar—that beast! Where's Edward Bevil? Why don't he come forward like a man, and flog the young scoundrel's life out?" shrieks Susanna. "Oh, with this here horsewhip, how I would like to give it you!" (She clutched her father's whip from the dresser, where it commonly hung on two hooks.) "Oh, you—you villain! you have got your pistol, have you? Shoot me, you little coward, I ain't afraid of you! You have your pistol in your box, have you?" (I uselessly said as much in reply to this taunt.) "Stop! I say, Pa,—that young thief isn't going away with them boxes, and robbing the whole house as he may. Open the boxes this instant! We'll see he's stole nothing! Open them, I say!"

I said I would do nothing of the kind. My blood was boiling up at this brutal behaviour; and as she dashed out of the room to seize one of my boxes, I put myself before her, and sat down on it.

This was assuredly a bad position to take, for the furious vixen began to strike me and lash at my face with the riding-whip, and it was more than I could do to wrench it from her.

Of course, at this act of defence on my part, Miss Sukey yelled for help, and called out, "Edward! Ned Bevil! The coward is a-striking me! Help, Ned!" At this, the shop door flies open, and Sukey's champion is about to rush on me, but he breaks down over my other box with a crash of his shins, and frightful execrations. His nose is prone on the pavement; Miss Sukey is wildly laying about her with her horsewhip (and I think Bevil's jacket came in for most of the blows); we are all *higgledy-piggledy*, plunging and scuffling in

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the dark—when a carriage drives up, which I had not heard in the noise of action, and as the hall door opened, I was pleased to think that Doctor Barnard had arrived, according to his promise.

It was not the Doctor. The new-comer wore a gown, but not a cassock. Soon after my trial before the magistrates was over, our neighbour John Jephson, of Winchelsea, mounted his cart and rode home from Rye market. He straightway went to our house, and told my mother of the strange scene which had just occurred, and of my accusation before the magistrates and acquittal. She begged, she ordered Jephson to lend her his cart. She seized whip and reins; she drove over to Rye; and I don't envy Jephson's old grey mare that journey with such a charioteer behind her. The door, opening from the street, flung light into the passage; and behold, we three warriors were sprawling on the floor in the higgledy-piggledy stage of the battle as my mother entered!

What a scene for a mother with a strong arm, a warm heart, and a high temper! Madame Duval rushed instantly at Miss Susan, and tore her shrieking from my body, which fair Susan was pummelling with the whip. A part of Susan's cap and tufts of her red hair were torn off by this maternal Amazon, and Susan was hurled through the open door into the kitchen, where she fell before her frightened father. I don't know how many blows my parent inflicted upon this creature. Mother might have slain her, but that the chaste Susanna, screaming shrilly, rolled under the deal kitchen table.

Madame Duval had wrenched away from this young person the horsewhip with which Susan had been operating upon the shoulders of her only son, and snatched the weapon as her fallen foe dropped. And now my mamma, seeing old Mr. Rudge sitting in a ghastly state of terror in the corner, rushed at the grocer, and in one minute, with butt and thong, inflicted a score of lashes over his face, nose, and eyes, for which anybody who chooses may pity him. "Ah, you will call my boy a thief, will you? Ah, you will take my Denny before the justices, will you? Prends-moi ça, gredin! Attrape, lâche! Nimm noch ein Paar Schläge, Spitzbube!" cries out Mother,

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in that polyglot language of English, French, High-Dutch, which she always used when excited. My good mother could shave and dress gentlemen's heads as well as any man; and faith, I am certain that no man in all Europe got a better dressing than Mr. Rudge on that evening.

Bless me! I have written near a page to describe a battle which could not have lasted five minutes. Mother's cart was drawn up at the side-street whilst she was victoriously engaged within. Meanwhile, Doctor Barnard's chaise had come to the front door of the shop, and he strode through it, and found us conquerors in possession of both fields. Since my last battle with Bevil, we both knew that I was more than a match for him. "In the King's name, I charge you drop your daggers," as the man says in the play. Our wars were over on the appearance of the man of peace. Mother left off plying the horsewhip over Rudge; Miss Sukey came out from under the table; Mr. Bevil rose, and slunk off to wash his bleeding face; and when the wretched Rudge whimpered out that he would have the law for this assault, the Doctor sternly said, "You were three to one during part of the battle, three to two afterwards, and after your testimony to-day, you perjured old miscreant, do you suppose any magistrate will believe you?'

No. Nobody did believe them. A punishment fell on these bad people. I don't know who gave the name, but Rudge and his daughter were called Ananias and Sapphira in Rye; and from that day the old man's affairs seemed to turn to the bad. When our boys of Pocock's met the grocer, his daughter, or his apprentice, the little miscreants would cry out, "Who put the money in Denny's box?" "Who bore false witness against his neighbour?" "Kiss the book, Sukey my dear, and tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, do you hear?" They had a dreadful life, that poor grocer's family. As for that rogue Tom Parrot, he comes into the shop one market day when the place was full, and asks for a penn'orth of sugar-candy, in payment for which he offers a penny to old Rudge sitting at his books behind his high desk. "It's a good bit of money," says Tom (as bold as the brass which he was tendering). "It *ain't marked*, Mr. Rudge, like Denny Duval's

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money!" And, no doubt, at a signal from the young reprobate, a chorus of boys posted outside began to sing, "Ananias, Ananias! He pretends to be so pious! Ananias and Saphia——" Well, well, the Saphia of these young wags was made to rhyme incorrectly with a word beginning with L. Nor was this the only punishment which befell the unhappy Rudge: Mrs. Wing and several of his chief patrons took away their custom from him and dealt henceforth with the opposition grocer. Not long after my affair, Miss Sukey married the toothless apprentice, who got a bad bargain with her, sweetheart or wife. I shall have to tell presently what a penalty they (and some others) had to pay for their wickedness; and of an act of contrition on poor Miss Sukey's part, whom, I am sure, I heartily forgive. Then was cleared up that mystery (which I could not understand, that Doctor Barnard could not, or would not) of the persecutions directed against a humble lad, who never, except in self-defence, did harm to any mortal.

I shouldered the trunks, causes of the late lamentable war, and put them into Mother's cart, into which I was about to mount, but the shrewd old lady would not let me take a place beside her. "I can drive well enough. Go thou in the chaise with the Doctor. He can talk to thee better, my son, than an ignorant woman like me. Neighbour Jephson told me how the good gentleman stood by thee in the justice-court. If ever I or mine can do anything to repay him, he may command me. Houp, Schimmel! Fort! Shalt soon be to house!" And with this she was off with my bag and baggage, as the night was beginning to fall.

I went out of the Rudges' house, into which I have never since set foot. I took my place in the chaise by my kind Doctor Barnard. We passed through Winchelsea gate, and dipped down into the marshy plain beyond, with bright glimpses of the Channel shining beside us, and the stars glittering overhead. We talked of the affair of the day, of course—the affair most interesting, that is, to me, who could think of nothing but magistrates, and committals, and acquittals. The Doctor repeated his firm conviction that there was a great smuggling conspiracy all along the coast and neighbourhood.

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Master Rudge was a member of the fraternity (which, indeed, I knew, having been out with his people once or twice, as I have told, to my shame). "Perhaps there were other people of my acquaintance who belonged to the same society?" the Doctor said, drily. "Gee up, Daisy! There were other people of my acquaintance, who were to be found at Winchelsea as well as at Rye. Your precious one-eyed enemy is in it; so, I have no doubt, is Monsieur le Chevalier de la Motte; so is—can you guess the name of anyone besides, Denny?"

"Yes, sir," I said, sadly; I knew my own grandfather was engaged in that traffic. "But if—if others are, I promise you, on my honour, I never will embark in it," I added.

"'Twill be more dangerous now than it has been. There will be obstacles to crossing the Channel which the contraband gentlemen have not known for some time past. Have you not heard the news?"

"What news?" Indeed I had thought of none but my own affairs. A post had come in that very evening from London, bringing intelligence of no little importance even to poor me, as it turned out. And the news was that His Majesty the King, having been informed that a treaty of amity and commerce had been signed between the Court of France and certain persons employed by His Majesty's revolted subjects in North America, "has judged it necessary to send orders to his Ambassador to withdraw from the French Court, . . . and relying with the firmest confidence upon the zealous and affectionate support of his faithful people, he is determined to prepare to exert, if it should be necessary, all the forces and resources of his kingdoms, which he trusts will be adequate to repel every insult and attack, and to maintain and uphold the power and reputation of this country."

So as I was coming out of Rye court-house, thinking of nothing but my enemies, and my trials, and my triumphs, post-boys were galloping all over the land to announce that we were at war with France. One of them, as we made our way home, clattered past us with his twanging horn, crying his news of war with France. As we wound along the plain, we could see the French lights across the Channel. My life

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has lasted for fifty years since then, and scarcely ever since, but for very very brief intervals, has that baleful war-light ceased to burn.

The messenger who bore this important news arrived after we left Rye, but riding at a much quicker pace than that which our Doctor's nag practised, overtook us ere we had reached our own town of Winchelsea. All our town was alive with the news in half-an-hour; and in the market-place, the public-houses, and from house to house, people assembled and talked. So we were at war again with our neighbours across the Channel, as well as with our rebellious children in America; and the rebellious children were having the better of the parent at this time. We boys at Pocock's had fought the war stoutly and with great elation at first. Over our maps we had pursued the rebels, and beaten them in repeated encounters. We routed them on Long Island. We conquered them at Brandywine. We vanquished them gloriously at Bunker's Hill. We marched triumphantly into Philadelphia with Howe. We were quite bewildered when we had to surrender with General Burgoyne at Saratoga; being, somehow, not accustomed to hear of British armies surrendering, and British valour being beat. "We had a half-holiday for Long Island," says Tom Parrot, sitting next to me in school. "I suppose we shall be flogged all round for Saratoga." As for those Frenchmen, we knew of their treason for a long time past, and were gathering up wrath against them. *Protestant* Frenchmen, it was agreed, were of a different sort; and I think the banished Huguenots of France have not been unworthy subjects of our new sovereign.

There was one dear little Frenchwoman in Winchelsea who I own was a sad rebel. When Mrs. Barnard, talking about the war, turned round to Agnes and said, "Agnes my child, on what side are you?" Mademoiselle de Barr blushed very red, and said, "I am a French girl, and I am of the side of my country. Vive la France! vive le Roi!"

"Oh, Agnes! oh, you perverted, ungrateful, little, little monster!" cries Mrs. Barnard, beginning to weep.

But the Doctor, far from being angry, smiled and looked pleased; and making Agnes a mock reverence, he said,

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"Mademoiselle de Saverne, I think a little Frenchwoman should be for France; and here is the tray, and we won't fight until after supper." And as he spoke that night the prayer appointed by his Church for the time of war—prayed that we might be armed with His defence who is the only Giver of all victory—I thought I never heard the good man's voice more touching and solemn.

When this daily and nightly ceremony was performed at the Rectory, a certain little person who belonged to the Roman Catholic faith used to sit aloof, her spiritual instructors forbidding her to take part in our English worship. When it was over, and the Doctor's household had withdrawn, Miss Agnes had a flushed, almost angry face.

"But what am I to do, Aunt Barnard?" said the little rebel. "If I pray for you, I pray that my country may be conquered, and that you may be saved and delivered out of our hands."

"No, faith, my child, I think we will not call upon thee for Amen," says the Doctor, patting her cheek.

"I don't know why you should wish to prevail over my country," whimpers the little maid. "I am sure I won't pray that any harm may happen to you, and Aunt Barnard, and Denny—never, never!" And in a passion of tears she buried her head against the breast of the good man, and we were all not a little moved.

Hand in hand we two young ones walked from the Rectory to the Priory House, which was only too near. I paused ere I rang at the bell, still holding her wistful little hand in mine.

"*You* will never be my enemy, Denny, will you?" she said, looking up.

"My dear," I faltered out, "I will love you for ever and ever!" I thought of the infant whom I brought home in my arms from the sea-shore, and once more my dearest maiden was held in them, and my heart throbbed with an exquisite bliss.

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CHAPTER VIII.

I ENTER HIS MAJESTY'S NAVY.

I PROMISE you there was no doubt or hesitation next Sunday regarding our good Rector's opinions. Ever since the war with America began, he had, to the best of his power, exhorted his people to be loyal, and testified to the authority of Cæsar. "War," he taught, "is not altogether an evil; and ordained of Heaven, as our illnesses and fevers doubtless are, for our good. It teaches obedience and contentment under privations; it fortifies courage; it tests loyalty; it gives occasion for showing mercifulness of heart; moderation in victory; endurance and cheerfulness under defeat. The brave who do battle victoriously in their country's cause leave a legacy of honour to their children. We English of the present day are the better for Crécy, and Agincourt, and Blenheim. I do not grudge the Scots their day of Bannockburn, nor the French their Fontenoy. Such valour proves the manhood of

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nations. When we have conquered the American rebellion, as I have no doubt we shall do, I trust it will be found that these rebellious children of ours have comported themselves in a manner becoming our English race, that they have been hardy and resolute, merciful and moderate. In that Declaration of War against France which has just reached us, and which interests all England, and the men of this coast especially, I have no more doubt in my mind that the right is on our side, than I have that Queen Elizabeth had a right to resist the Spanish Armada. In an hour of almost equal peril, I pray we may show the same watchfulness, constancy, and valour: bracing ourselves to do the duty before us, and leaving the issue to the Giver of all Victory."

Ere he left the pulpit, our good Rector announced that he would call a meeting for next market-day in our Town Hall—a meeting of gentry, farmers, and seafaring men, to devise means for the defence of our coast and harbours. The French might be upon us any day; and all our people were in a buzz of excitement, Volunteers and Fencibles patrolling our shores, and fishermen's glasses for ever on the look-out towards the opposite coast.

We had a great meeting in the Town Hall, and of the speakers it was who should be most loyal to King and country. Subscriptions for a Defence Fund were straightway set afoot. It was determined the Cinque Port towns should raise a regiment of Fencibles. In Winchelsea alone the gentry and chief tradesmen agreed to raise a troop of volunteer horse to patrol along the shore and communicate with depôts of the regular military formed at Dover, Hastings, and Deal. The fishermen were enrolled to serve as coast and look-out men. From Margate to Folkestone the coast was watched and patrolled: and privateers were equipped and sent to sea from many of the ports along our line. On the French shore we heard of similar warlike preparations. The fishermen on either coast did not harm each other as yet, though presently they too fell to blows: and I have sad reason to know that a certain ancestor of mine did not altogether leave off his relations with his French friends.

However, at the meeting in the Town Hall, Grandfather

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came forward with a subscription and a long speech. He said that he and his co-religionists and countrymen of France had now for near a century experienced British hospitality and freedom; that when driven from home by Papist persecution, they had found protection here, and that now was the time for French Protestants to show that they were grateful and faithful subjects of King George. Grandfather's speech was very warmly received; that old man had lungs, and a knack of speaking, which never failed him. He could spin out sentences by the yard, as I knew, who had heard him expound for half-hours together with that droning voice which had long ceased (Heaven help me!) to carry conviction to the heart of Grandfather's graceless grandson.

When he had done, Mr. George Weston, of the Priory, spoke, and with a good spirit too. (He and *my dear friend Mr. Joe* were both present, and seated with the gentlefolk and magistrates at the raised end of the hall.) Mr. George said that as Mr. Duval had spoken for the French Protestants, he, for his part, could vouch for the loyalty of another body of men, the Roman Catholics of England. In the hour of danger he trusted that he and his brethren were as good subjects as any Protestant in the realm. And as a trifling test of his loyalty—though he believed his neighbour Duval was a richer man than himself (Grandfather shrieked a "No, no!" and there was a roar of laughter in the hall)—he offered as a contribution to a defence fund to lay down two guineas for Mr. Duval's one!

"I will give my guinea, I am sure," says Grandfather, very meekly, "and may that poor man's mite be accepted and useful!"

"One guinea!" roars Weston; "I will give a hundred guineas!"

"And I another hundred," says his brother. "We will show, as Roman Catholic gentry of England, that we are not inferior in loyalty to our Protestant brethren."

"Put my fazer-in-law Peter Duval down for one 'ondred guinea!" calls out my mother, in her deep voice. "Put me down for twenty-fife guinea, and my son Denis for twenty-fife guinea! We have eaten of English bread, and we are

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grateful, and we sing with all our hearts, God save King George!"

Mother's speech was received with great applause. Farmers, gentry, shopkeepers, rich and poor, crowded forward to offer their subscription. Before the meeting broke up, a very handsome sum was promised for the arming and equipment of the Winchelsea Fencibles; and old Colonel Evans, who had been present at Minden and Fontenoy, and young Mr. Barlow, who had lost a leg at Brandywine, said that they would superintend the drilling of the Winchelsea Fencibles, until such time as His Majesty should send officers of his own to command the corps. It was agreed that everybody spoke and acted with public spirit. "Let the French land!" was our cry. "The men of Rye, the men of Winchelsea, the men of Hastings, will have a guard of honour to receive them on the shore!"

That the French intended to try and land was an opinion pretty general amongst us, especially when His Majesty's proclamation came, announcing the great naval and military armaments which the enemy was preparing. We had *certain communications* with Boulogne, Calais, and Dunkirk still, and our fishing-boats sometimes went as far as Ostend. Our informants brought us full news of all that was going on in those ports; of the troops assembled there, and Royal French ships and privateers fitted out. I was not much surprised one night to find our old Boulogne ally Bidois smoking his pipe with Grandfather in the kitchen, and regaling himself with a glass of his own brandy, which I know had not paid unto Cæsar Cæsar's due. The pigeons on the hill were making their journeys still. Once, when I went up to visit Farmer Perreau, I found Monsieur de la Motte and a companion of his sending off one of these birds, and La Motte's friend said sulkily, in German, "What does the little *Spitzbube* do here?" "Versteht vielleicht Deutsch," murmured La Motte, hurriedly, and turned round to me with a grin of welcome, and asked news of Grandfather and my mother.

This ally of the Chevalier's was a Lieutenant Lütterloh, who had served in America in one of the Hessian regiments on our side, and who was now pretty often in Winchelsea, where he talked magnificently about war and his own achievements, both

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on the Continent and in our American provinces. He lived near Canterbury as I heard. I guessed, of course, that he was one of the "Mackerel" party, and engaged in smuggling, like La Motte, the Westons, and my graceless old grandfather and his ally, Mr. Rudge, of Rye. I shall have presently to tell how bitterly Monsieur de la Motte had afterwards to rue his acquaintance with this German.

Knowing the Chevalier's intimacy with the gentlemen connected with the Mackerel fishery, I had little cause to be surprised at seeing him and the German captain together; though a circumstance now arose, which might have induced me to suppose him engaged in practices yet more lawless and dangerous than smuggling. I was walking up to the hill—must I let slip the whole truth, madame, in my memoirs? Well, it never did or will hurt anybody; and, as it only concerns you and me, may be told without fear. I frequently, I say, walked up the hill to look at these pigeons, for a certain young person was a great lover of pigeons too, and occasionally would come to see Farmer Perreau's columbarium. Did I love the sight of this dear white dove more than any other? Did it come sometimes fluttering to my heart? Ah! the old blood throbs there with the mere recollection. I feel —shall we say how many years younger, my dear? In fine, those little walks to the pigeon-house are among the sweetest of all our stores of memories.

I was coming away, then, once from this house of billing and cooing, when I chanced to espy an old schoolmate, Thomas Measom by name, who was exceedingly proud of his new uniform as a private of our regiment of Winchelsea Fencibles, was never tired of wearing it, and always walked out with his firelock over his shoulder. As I came up to Tom, he had just discharged his piece, and hit his bird too. One of Farmer Perreau's pigeons lay dead at Tom's feet—one of the carrier pigeons, and the young fellow was rather scared at what he had done, especially when he saw a little piece of paper tied under the wing of the slain bird.

He could not read the message, which was written in our German handwriting, and was only in three lines, which I was better able to decipher than Tom. I supposed at first that the

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message had to do with the smuggling business, in which so many of our friends were engaged, and Measom walked off rather hurriedly, being by no means anxious to fall into the farmer's hands, who would be but ill pleased at having one of his birds killed.

I put the paper in my pocket, not telling Tom what I thought about the matter: but I did have a thought, and determined to converse with my dear Doctor Barnard regarding it. I asked to see him at the Rectory, and there read to him the contents of the paper which the poor messenger was bearing when Tom's ball brought him down.

My good Doctor was not a little excited and pleased when I interpreted the pigeon's message to him, and especially praised me for my reticence with Tom upon the subject. "It may be a mare's nest we have discovered, Denny, my boy," says the Doctor; "it may be a matter of importance. I will see Colonel Evans on this subject to-night." We went off to Mr. Evans's lodgings: he was the old officer who had fought under the Duke of Cumberland, and was, like the Doctor, a justice of peace for our county. I translated for the Colonel the paper, which was to the following effect:—

[Left blank by Mr. Thackeray.]

Mr. Evans looked at a paper before him, containing an authorised list of the troops at the various Cinque Port stations, and found the poor pigeon's information quite correct. "Was this the Chevalier's writing?" the gentleman asked. No, I did not think it was Monsieur de la Motte's handwriting. Then I mentioned the other German in whose company I had seen Monsieur de la Motte: the Monsieur Lütterloh whom Mr. Evans said he knew quite well. "If Lütterloh is engaged in the business," said Mr. Evans, "we shall know more about it;" and he whispered something to Doctor Barnard. Meanwhile he praised me exceedingly for my caution, enjoined me to say nothing regarding the matter, and to tell my comrade to hold his tongue.

As for Tom Measom he was less cautious. Tom talked about his adventures to one or two cronies; and to his

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parents, who were tradesmen like my own. They occupied a snug house in Winchelsea, with a garden and a good paddock. One day their horse was found dead in the stable. Another day their cow burst and died. There used to be strange acts of revenge perpetrated in those days; and farmers, tradesmen, or gentry, who rendered themselves obnoxious to *certain parties*, had often to rue the enmity which they provoked. That my unhappy old grandfather was, and remained in the smugglers' league, I fear is a fact which I can't deny or palliate. He paid a heavy penalty to be sure, but my narrative is not advanced far enough to allow of my telling how the old man was visited for his sins.

There came to visit our Winchelsea magistrates Captain Pearson, of the "Serapis" frigate, then in the Downs; and I remembered this gentleman, having seen him at the house of my kind patron, Sir Peter Denis, in London. Mr. Pearson also recollected me as the little boy who had shot the highwayman; and was much interested when he heard of the carrier pigeon, and the news which he bore. It appeared that he, as well as Colonel Evans, was acquainted with Mr. Lütterloh. "You are a good lad," the Captain said; "but we know," said the Captain, "all the news those birds carry."

All this time our whole coast was alarmed, and hourly expectant of a French invasion. The French fleet was said to outnumber ours in the Channel: the French army, we knew, was enormously superior to our own. I can remember the terror and the excitement; the panic of some, the braggart behaviour of others; and especially I recall the way in which our church was cleared one Sunday, by a rumour which ran through the pews, that the French were actually landed. How the people rushed away from the building, and some of them whom I remember the loudest amongst the braggarts, and singing their "Come if you dare!" Mother and I in our pew, and Captain Pearson in the Rector's, were the only people who sat out the sermon, of which Doctor Barnard would not abridge a line, and which, I own, I thought was extremely tantalising and provoking. He gave the blessing with more than ordinary slowness and solemnity; and had to open his own pulpit-door and stalk down the steps without

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the accompaniment of his usual escort, the clerk, who had skipped out of his desk, and run away like the rest of the congregation. Doctor Barnard had me home to dinner at the Rectory; my good mother being much too shrewd to be jealous of this kindness shown to me and not to her. When she waited upon Mrs. Barnard with her basket of laces and perfumeries, Mother stood as became her station as a tradeswoman. "For thee, my son, 'tis different," she said. "I will have thee be a gentleman." And faith, I hope I have done the best of my humble endeavour to fulfil the good lady's wish.

The war, the probable descent of the French, and the means of resisting the invasion, of course formed the subject of the gentlemen's conversation; and though I did not understand all that passed, I was made to comprehend subsequently, and may as well mention facts here which only came to be explained to me later. The pigeons took over certain information to France, in return for that which they brought. By these and other messengers our Government was kept quite well instructed as to the designs and preparations of the enemy, and I remember how it was stated that His Majesty had occult correspondents of his own in France, whose information was of surprising accuracy. Master Lütterloh dabbled in the information line. He had been a soldier in America, a recruiting-crimp here, and I know not what besides: but the information he gave was given under the authority of his employers, to whom in return he communicated the information he received from France. The worthy gentleman was, in fact, a spy by trade; and though he was not born to be hanged, came by an awful payment for his treachery, as I shall have to tell in due time. As for Monsieur de la Motte, the gentlemen were inclined to think that his occupation was smuggling, not treason, and in that business the Chevalier was allied with scores, nay hundreds, of people round about him. One I knew, my pious grandpapa: other two lived at the Priory, and I could count many more even in our small town, namely, all the Mackerel men to whom I had been sent on the night of poor Madame de Saverne's funeral.

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Captain Pearson shook me by the hand very warmly when I rose to go home, and I saw, by the way in which the good Doctor regarded me, that he was meditating some special kindness in my behalf. It came very soon, and at a moment when I was plunged in the very dismalest depths of despair. My dear little Agnes, though a boarder at the house of those odious Westons, had leave given to her to visit Mrs. Barnard; and that kind lady never failed to give me some signal by which I knew that my little sweetheart was at the Rectory. One day the message would be, "The Rector wants back his volume of the 'Arabian Nights,' and Denis had better bring it." Another time, my dearest Mrs. Barnard would write on a card, "You may come to tea, if you have done your mathematics well," or "You may have a French lesson," and so forth—and there, sure enough, would be my sweet little tutoress. How old, my dear, was Juliet when she and young Capulet began their loves? My sweetheart had not done playing with dolls when our little passion began to bud: and the sweet talisman of innocence I wore in my heart hath never left me through life, and shielded me from many a temptation.

Shall I make a clean breast of it? We young hypocrites used to write each other little notes, and pop them in certain cunning corners known to us two. Juliet used to write in a great round hand in French; Romeo replied, I dare say, with doubtful spelling.

We had devised sundry queer receptacles where our letters lay *poste restante*. There was the china pot-pourri jar on the Japan cabinet in the drawing-room. There, into the midst of the roses and spices, two cunning young people used to thrust their hands, and stir about spice and rose-leaves, until they lighted upon a little bit of folded paper more fragrant and precious than all your flowers and cloves. Then in the hall we had a famous post-office, namely, the barrel of the great blunderbuss over the mantelpiece, from which hung a ticket on which "loaded" was written, only I knew better, having helped Martin, the Doctor's man, to clean the gun. Then in the churchyard under the wing of the left cherub on Sir Jasper Billing's tomb, there was a certain hole in which

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we put little scraps of paper written in a cipher devised by ourselves, and on these scraps of paper we wrote:—well, can you guess what? We wrote the old song which young people have sung ever since singing began. We wrote "Amo, amas," &c., in our childish handwriting. Ah! thanks be to Heaven, though the hands tremble a little now, they write the words still! My dear, the last time I was in Winchelsea, I went and looked at Sir Jasper's tomb, and at the hole under the cherub's wing; there was only a little mould and moss there. Mrs. Barnard found and read one or more of these letters, as the dear lady told me afterwards, but there was no harm in them; and when the Doctor put on his *grand sérieux* (as to be sure he had a right to do), and was for giving the culprits a scolding, his wife reminded him of a time when he was captain of Harrow school, and found time to write other exercises than Greek and Latin to a young lady who lived in the village. Of these matters, I say, she told me in later days; in all days, after our acquaintance began, she was my truest friend and protectress.

But this dearest and happiest season of my life (for so I think it, though I am at this moment happy, most happy, and thankful) was to come to an abrupt ending, and poor Humpty Dumpty having climbed the wall of bliss, was to have a great and sudden fall, which, for a while, perfectly crushed and bewildered him. I have said what harm came to my companion Tom Measom, for meddling in Monsieur Lütterloh's affairs and talking of them. Now there were two who knew Meinherr's secret, Tom Measom, namely, and Denis Duval; and though Denis held his tongue about the matter, except in conversing with the Rector and Captain Pearson, Lütterloh came to know that I had read and explained the pigeon-despatch of which Measom had shot the bearer; and, indeed, it was Captain Pearson himself, with whom the German had sundry private dealings, who was Lütterloh's informer. Lütterloh's rage, and that of his accomplice, against me, when they learned the unlucky part I had had in the discovery, were still greater than their wrath against Measom. The Chevalier de la Motte, who had once been neutral, and even kind to me, was confirmed in a steady

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hatred against me, and held me as an enemy whom he was determined to get out of his way. And hence came that catastrophe which precipitated Humpty Dumpty Duval, Esquire, off the wall from which he was gazing at his beloved, as she disported in her garden below.

One evening—shall I ever forget that evening? It was Friday, [Left blank by Mr. Thackeray]—after my little maiden had been taking tea with Mrs. Barnard, I had leave to escort her to her home at Mr. Weston's at the Priory, which is not a hundred yards from the Rectory door. All the evening the company had been talking about battle and danger, and invasion, and the war news from France and America; and my little maiden sat silent, with her great eyes looking at one speaker, and another, and stitching at her sampler. At length the clock tolled the hour of nine, when Miss Agnes must return to her guardian. I had the honour to serve as her escort, and would have wished the journey to be ten times as long as that brief one between the two houses. "Good-night, Agnes!" "Good-night, Denis! On Sunday I shall see you!" We whisper one little minute under the stars; the little hand lingers in mine with a soft pressure; we hear the servants' footsteps over the marble floor within, and I am gone. Somehow, at night and at morning, at lessons and play, I was always thinking about this little maid.

"I shall see you on Sunday," and this was Friday! Even that interval seemed long to me. Little did either of us know what a long separation was before us, and what strange changes, dangers, adventures, I was to undergo ere I again should press that dearest hand.

The gate closed on her, and I walked away by the churchwall, and towards my own home. I was thinking of that happy, that unforgotten night of my childhood, when I had been the means of rescuing the dearest little maiden from an awful death; how, since then, I had cherished her with my love of love; and what a blessing she had been to my young life. For many years she was its only cheerer and companion. At home I had food and shelter, and, from Mother at least, kindness, but no society: it was not until I became a familiar of the good Doctor's roof that I knew friendship and kind

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companionship. What gratitude ought I not to feel for a boon so precious as there was conferred on me? Ah, I vowed, I prayed, that I might make myself worthy of such friends; and so was sauntering homewards, lost in these happy thoughts, when—when something occurred which at once decided the whole course of my after-life.

This something was a blow with a bludgeon across my ear and temple which sent me to the ground utterly insensible. I remember half-a-dozen men darkling in an alley by which I had to pass, then a scuffle and an oath or two, and a voice crying, "Give it him, curse him!" and then I was down on the pavement as flat and lifeless as the flags on which I lay. When I woke up, I was almost blinded with blood; I was in a covered cart with a few more groaning wretches; and when I uttered a moan, a brutal voice growled out with many oaths an instant order to be silent, or my head should be broken again. I woke up in a ghastly pain and perplexity, but presently fainted once more. When I awoke again to a half-consciousness I felt myself being lifted from the cart and carried, and then flung into the bows of a boat, where I suppose I was joined by the rest of the dismal cart's company. Then someone came and washed my bleeding head with salt-water (which made it throb and ache very cruelly). Then the man, whispering, "I'm a friend," bound my forehead tight with a handkerchief, and the boat pulled out to a brig that was lying as near to land as she could come, and the same man who had struck and sworn at me would have stabbed me as I reeled up the side, but that my friend interposed in my behalf. It was Tom Hookham, to whose family I had given the three guineas, and who assuredly saved my life on that day, for the villain who attempted it afterwards confessed that he intended to do me an injury. I was thrust into the fore-peak with three or four more maimed and groaning wretches, and, the wind serving, the lugger made for her destination, whatever that might be. What a horrid night of fever and pain it was. I remember I fancied I was carrying Agnes out of the water; I called out her name repeatedly, as Tom Hookham informed me, who came with a lantern and looked at us poor wretches huddled in our shed. Tom brought me

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more water, and in pain and fever I slept through a wretched night.

In the morning our tender came up with a frigate that was lying off a town, and I was carried up the ship's side on Hookham's arm. The Captain's boat happened to pull from shore at the very same time, and the Captain and his friends, and our wretched party of pressed men with their captors, thus stood face to face. My wonder and delight were not a little aroused when I saw the Captain was no other than my dear Rector's friend, Captain Pearson. My face was bound up, and so pale and bloody as to be scarcely recognisable. "So, my man," he said, rather sternly, "you have been for fighting, have you? This comes of resisting men employed on His Majesty's service."

"I never resisted," I said; "I was struck from behind, Captain Pearson."

The Captain looked at me with a haughty surprised air. Indeed a more disreputable-looking lad he scarcely could see. After a moment he said, "Why, bless my soul, is it you, my boy? Is it young Duval?"

"Yes, sir," I said; and whether from emotion, or fever, or loss of blood and weakness, I felt my brain going again, and once more fainted and fell.

When I came to myself, I found myself in a berth in the "Serapis," where there happened to be but one other patient. I had had fever and delirium for a day, during which it appears I was constantly calling out, "Agnes, Agnes!" and offering to shoot highwaymen. A very kind surgeon's mate had charge of me, and showed me much more attention than a poor wounded lad could have had a right to expect in my wretched humiliating position. On the fifth day I was well again, though still very weak and pale; but not too weak to be unable to go to the Captain when he sent for me to his cabin. My friend the surgeon's mate showed me the way.

Captain Pearson was writing at his table, but sent away his secretary, and when the latter was gone shook hands with me very kindly, and talked unreservedly about the strange accident which had brought me on board his ship. His officer had information, he said, "and I had information," the

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Captain went on to say, "that some very good seamen of what we called the Mackerel party were to be taken at a public-house in Winchelsea," and his officer netted a half-dozen of them there, "who will be much better employed" (says Captain Pearson) "in serving the King in one of His Majesty's vessels, than in cheating him on board their own. You were a stray fish that was caught along with the rest. I know your story. I have talked it over with our good friends at the Rectory. For a young fellow, you have managed to make yourself some queer enemies in your native town; and you are best out of it. On the night when I first saw you, I promised our friends to take you as a first-class volunteer. In due time you will pass your examination, and be rated as a midshipman. Stay—your mother is in Deal. You can go ashore, and she will fit you out. Here are letters for you. I wrote to Doctor Barnard as soon I found who you were."

With this, I took leave of my good patron and captain, and ran off to read my two letters. One, from Mrs. Barnard and the Doctor conjointly, told how alarmed they had been at my being lost, until Captain Pearson wrote to say how I had been found. The letter from my good mother informed me, in her rough way, how she was waiting at the "Blue Anchor Inn" in Deal, and would have come to me; but my new comrades would laugh at a rough old woman coming off in a shore boat to look after her boy. It was better that I should go to her at Deal, where I should be fitted out in a way becoming an officer in His Majesty's service. To Deal accordingly I went by the next boat; the good-natured surgeon's mate, who had attended me and taken a fancy to me, lending me a clean shirt, and covering the wound on my head neatly, so that it was scarcely seen under my black hair. "Le pauvre cher enfant! comme il est pâle!" How my mother's eyes kindled with kindness as she saw me! The good soul insisted on dressing my hair with her own hands, and tied it in a smart queue with a black ribbon. Then she took me off to a tailor in the town, and provided me with an outfit a lord's son might have brought on board. My uniforms were ready in a very short time. Twenty-four hours after they were ordered Mr.

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DENIS'S VALET.

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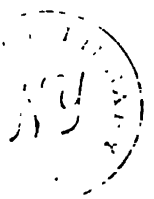

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Levy brought them to our inn, and I had the pleasure of putting them on; and walked on the Parade, with my hat cocked, my hanger by my side, and Mother on my arm. Though I was perfectly well pleased with myself, I think she was the prouder of the two. To one or two tradesmen and their wives, whom she knew, she gave a most dignified nod of recognition this day; but passed on without speaking, as if she would have them understand that they ought to keep their distance when she was in such fine company. "When I am in the shop, I am in the shop, and my customers' very humble servant," said she; "but when I am walking on Deal Parade with thee, I am walking with a young gentleman in His Majesty's navy. And Heaven has blessed us of late, my child, and thou shalt have the means of making as good a figure as any young officer in the service." And she put such a great heavy purse of guineas into my pocket, that I wondered at her bounty. "Remember, my son," added she, "thou art a gentleman now. Always respect yourself. Tradespeople are no company for thee. For me 'tis different. I am but a poor hairdresser and shopkeeper." We supped together at the "Anchor," and talked about home, that was but two days off, and yet so distant. She never once mentioned my little maiden to me, nor did I somehow dare to allude to her. Mother had prepared a nice bedroom for me at the inn, to which she made me retire early, as I was still weak and faint after my fever; and when I was in my bed she came and knelt down by it, and with tears rolling down her furrowed face, offered up a prayer in her native German language, that He who had been pleased to succour me from perils hitherto, would guard me for the future, and watch over me in the voyage of life which was now about to begin. Now, as it is drawing to its close, I look back at it with an immense awe and thankfulness, for the strange dangers from which I have escaped, the great blessings I have enjoyed.

I wrote a long letter to Mrs. Barnard, narrating my adventures as cheerfully as I could, though, truth to say, when I thought of home and a little Someone there, a large tear or two blotted my paper, but I had reason to be grateful for the kindness I had received, and was not a little elated at being

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actually a gentleman, and in a fair way to be an officer in His Majesty's navy.

As I was strutting on the Mall, on the second day of my visit to Deal, what should I see but my dear Doctor Barnard's well-known post-chaise nearing us from the Dover Road. The Doctor and his wife looked with a smiling surprise at my altered appearance; and as they stepped out of their chaise at the inn, the good lady fairly put her arms round me, and gave me a kiss. Mother, from her room, saw the embrace, I suppose. "Thou hast found good friends there, Denis, my son," she said, with sadness in her deep voice. "'Tis well. They can befriend thee better than I can. Now thou art well, I may depart in peace. When thou art ill, the old mother will come to thee, and will bless thee always, my son." She insisted upon setting out on her return homewards that afternoon. She had friends at Hythe, Folkestone, and Dover (as I knew well), and would put up with one or other of them. She had before packed my new chest with wonderful neatness. Whatever her feelings might be at our parting, she showed no signs of tears or sorrow, but mounted her little chaise in the inn yard, and, without looking back, drove away on her solitary journey. The landlord of the "Anchor" and his wife bade her farewell, very cordially and respectfully. They asked me, would I not step into the bar and take a glass of wine or spirits? I have said that I never drank either; and suspect that my mother furnished my host with some of these stores out of those fishing-boats of which she was owner. "If I had an only son, and such a good-looking one," Mrs. Boniface was pleased to say (can I, after such a fine compliment, be so ungrateful as to forget her name?)—"If I had an only son, and could leave him as well off as Mrs. Duval can leave you, *I* wouldn't send him to sea in war-time, that I wouldn't." "And though you don't drink any wine, some of your friends on board may," my landlord added, "and they are always welcome at the 'Blue Anchor.'" This was not the first time I had heard that my mother was rich. "If she be so," I said to my host, "indeed it is more than I know." On which he and his wife both commended me for my caution; adding with a knowing smile, "We know more than we tell, Mr.

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Duval. Have you ever heard of Mr. Weston? Have you ever heard of Monsieur de la Motte? We know where Boulogne is, and Ost——" "Hush, wife!" here breaks in my landlord. "If the Captain don't wish to talk, why should he? There is the bell ringing from the 'Benbow' and your dinner going up to the Doctor, Mr. Duval." It was indeed as he said, and I sat down in the company of my good friends, bringing a fine appetite to their table.

The Doctor on his arrival had sent a messenger to his friend Captain Pearson, and whilst we were at our meal, the Captain arrived in his own boat from the ship, and insisted that Doctor and Mrs. Barnard should take their dessert in his cabin on board. This procured Mr. Denis Duval the honour of an invitation, and I and my new sea-chest were accommodated in the boat and taken to the frigate. My box was consigned to the gunner's cabin, where my hammock was now slung. After sitting a short time at Mr. Pearson's table, a brother-midshipman gave me a hint to withdraw, and I made the acquaintance of my comrades, of whom there were about a dozen on board the "Serapis." Though only a volunteer, I was taller and older than many of the midshipmen. They knew who I was, of course—the son of a shopkeeper at Winchelsea. Then, and afterwards, I had my share of rough jokes, you may be sure; but I took them with good-humour; and I had to fight my way as I had learned to do at school before. There is no need to put down here the number of black eyes and bloody noses which I received and delivered. I am sure I bore but little malice: and, thank Heaven, never wronged a man so much as to be obliged to hate him afterwards. Certain men there were who hated *me*: but they are gone, and I am here, with a pretty clear conscience, Heaven be praised; and little the worse for their enmity.

The first lieutenant of our ship, Mr. Page, was related to Mrs. Barnard, and this kind lady gave him such a character of her very grateful humble servant, and narrated my adventures to him so pathetically, that Mr. Page took me into his special favour, and interested some of my messmates in my behalf. The story of the highwayman caused endless talk and jokes against me, which I took in good part, and I

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established my footing among my messmates by adopting the plan I had followed at school, and taking an early opportunity to fight a well-known bruiser amongst our company of midshipmen. You must know they called me "Soapsuds," "Powderpuff," and like names, in consequence of my grandfather's known trade of hairdresser; and one of my comrades bantering me one day, cried, "I say, Soapsuds, where was it you hit the highwayman?" "There!" said I, and gave him a clean left-handed blow on his nose, which must have caused him to see a hundred blue lights. I know about five minutes afterwards he gave me just such another blow; and we fought it out and were good friends ever after. What is this? Did I not vow as I was writing the last page yesterday that I would not say a word about my prowess at fisticuffs? You see we are ever making promises to be good, and forgetting them. I suppose other people can say as much.

Before leaving the ship my kind friends once more desired to see me, and Mrs. Barnard, putting her finger to her lip, took out from her pocket a little packet, which she placed in my hand. I thought she was giving me money, and felt somehow disappointed at being so treated by her. But when she was gone to shore I opened the parcel, and found a locket there, and a little curl of glossy black hair. Can you guess whose? Along with the locket was a letter in French, in a large girlish hand, in which the writer said, that night and day she prayed for her dear Denis. And where, think you, the locket is now? where it has been for forty-two years, and where it will remain when a faithful heart that beats under it hath ceased to throb.

At gunfire our friends took leave of the frigate, little knowing the fate that was in store for many on board her. In three weeks from that day what a change! The glorious misfortune which befell us is written in the annals of our country.

On the very evening whilst Captain Pearson was entertaining his friends from Winchelsea, he received orders to sail for Hull, and place himself under the command of the Admiral there. From the Humber we presently were despatched northward to Scarborough. There had been not a little

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excitement along the whole northern coast for some time past, in consequence of the appearance of some American privateers, who had ransacked a Scottish nobleman's castle, and levied contributions from a Cumberland seaport town. As we were close in with Scarborough a boat came off with letters from the magistrates of that place, announcing that this squadron had actually been seen off the coast. The commodore of this wandering piratical expedition was known to be a rebel Scotchman; who fought with a rope round his neck to be sure. No doubt many of us youngsters vapoured about the courage with which we would engage him, and made certain, if we could only meet with him, of seeing him hang from his own yard-arm. It was *Diis aliter visum*, as we used to say at Pocock's; and it was we threw *deuceace* too. Traitor, if you will, was Monsieur John Paul Jones, afterwards knight of His Most Christian Majesty's Order of Merit; but a braver traitor never wore sword.

We had been sent for in order to protect a fleet of merchantmen that were bound to the Baltic, and were to sail under the convoy of our ship and the "Countess of Scarborough," commanded by Captain Piercy. And thus it came about, that, after being twenty-five days in His Majesty's service, I had the fortune to be present at one of the most severe and desperate combats that has been fought in our or any time.

I shall not attempt to tell that story of the battle of the 23rd September, which ended in our glorious Captain striking his own colours to our superior and irresistible enemy. Sir Richard has told the story of his disaster in words nobler than any I could supply, who, though indeed engaged in that fearful action in which our flag went down before a renegade Briton and his motley crew, saw but a very small portion of the battle which ended so fatally for us. It did not commence till nightfall. How well I remember the sound of the enemy's gun of which the shot crashed into our side in reply to the challenge of our captain, who hailed her! Then came a broadside from us—the first I had ever heard in battle.

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NOTES ON DENIS DUVAL.

THE readers of the *Cornhill Magazine* have now read the last line written by William Makepeace Thackeray. The story breaks off as his life ended—full of vigour, and blooming with new promise like the apple-trees in this month of May: * the only difference between the work and the life is this, that the last chapters of the one have their little pathetical gaps and breaks of unfinished effort, the last chapters of the other were fulfilled and complete. But the life may be left alone; while as for the gaps and breaks in his last pages, nothing that we can write is likely to add to their significance. There they are; and the reader's mind has already fallen into them, with sensations not to be improved by the ordinary commentator. If Mr. Thackeray himself could do it, that would be another thing. Preacher he called himself in some of the Roundabout discourses in which his softer spirit is always to be heard, but he never had a text after his own mind so much as these last broken chapters would give him *now*. There is the date of a certain Friday to be filled in, and Time is no more. Is it *very* presumptuous to imagine the Roundabout that Mr. Thackeray would write upon this unfinished work of his, if he could come back to do it? We do not think it is, or very difficult either. What Carlyle calls the divine gift of speech was so largely his, especially in his maturer years, that he made clear in what he *did* say pretty much what he *would* say about anything that engaged his thought; and we have only to imagine a discourse "On the

* The last number of "Denis Duval" appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* of June 1864.

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Two Women at the Mill," * to read off upon our minds the sense of what Mr. Thackeray alone could have found language for.

Vain are these speculations—or are they vain? Not if we try to think what he would think of his broken labours, considering that one of these days our labours must be broken too. Still, there is not much to be said about it: and we pass on to the real business in hand, which is to show as well as we may what "Denis Duval" would have been had its author lived to complete his work. Fragmentary as it is, the story must always be of considerable importance, because it will stand as a warning to imperfect critics never to be in haste to cry of any intellect, "His vein is worked out: there is nothing left in him but the echoes of emptiness." The decriers were never of any importance, yet there is more than satisfaction, there is something like triumph in the mind of every honest man of letters when he sees, and knows everybody must see, how a genius which was sometimes said to have been guilty of passing behind a cloud toward the evening of his day, came out to shine with new splendour before the day was done. "Denis Duval" is unfinished, but it ends *that* question. The fiery genius that blazed over the city in "Vanity Fair," and passed on to a ripe afternoon in "Esmond," is not a whit less great, it is only broader, more soft, more mellow and kindly, as it sinks too suddenly in "Denis Duval."

This is said to introduce the settlement of another too-hasty notion which we believe to have been pretty generally accepted: namely, that Mr. Thackeray took little pains in the construction of his works. The truth is, that he very industriously *did* take pains. We find that out when we inquire, for the benefit of the readers of his Magazine, whether there is anything to tell of his designs for "Denis Duval." The answer comes in the form of many most careful notes, and memoranda of inquiry into minute matters of detail to make the story *true*. How many young novelists are there who *haven't* much genius to fall back upon, who yet, if they

* "Two women shall be grinding at the mill, one shall be taken and the other left."

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desired to set their hero down in Winchelsea a hundred years ago for instance, would take the trouble to learn how the town was built, and what gate led to Rye (if the hero happened to have any dealings with that place), and who were its local magnates, and how it was governed? And yet this is what Mr. Thackeray did, though his investigation added not twenty lines to the story and no "interest" whatever: it was simply so much conscientious effort to keep as near truth in feigning as he could. That Winchelsea had three gates, "Newgate on S.W., Landgate on N.E., Strandgate (*leading to Rye*) on S.E.;" that "the government was vested in a mayor and twelve jurats, jointly;" that "it sends canopy-bearers on occasion of a coronation," &c. &c. &c., all is duly entered in a note-book with reference to authorities. And so about the refugees at Rye, and the French Reformed church there: nothing is written that history cannot vouch for. The neat and orderly way in which the notes are set down is also remarkable. Each has its heading, as thus:—

"*Refugees at Rye.*—At Rye is a small settlement of French refugees, who are for the most part fishermen, and have a minister of their own.

"*French Reformed Church.*—Wherever there is a sufficient number of faithful there is a church. The pastor is admitted to his office by the provincial synod, or the colloquy, provided it be composed of seven pastors at least. Pastors are seconded in their duties by laymen, who take the title of Ancients, Elders, and Deacons precentors. The union of Pastors, Deacons, and Elders forms a consistory."

Of course there is no considerable merit in care like this, but it is a merit which the author of "Denis Duval" is not popularly credited with, and therefore it may as well be set down to him. Besides, it may serve as an example to fledgeling geniuses of what *he* thought necessary to the perfection of his work.

But the chief interest of these notes and memoranda lies in the outlook they give us upon the conduct of the story. It is not desirable to print them all; indeed to do so would be to copy a long list of mere references to books, magazines, and journals, where such byway bits of illustration are to be found

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as lit Mr. Thackeray's mind to so vivid an insight into manners and character. Still, we are anxious to give the reader as complete an idea of the story as we can.

First, here is a characteristic letter, in which Mr. Thackeray sketches his plot for the information of his publisher:—

"My dear S——,—I was born in the year 1764, at Winchelsea, where my father was a grocer and clerk of the church. Everybody in the place was a good deal connected with smuggling.

"There used to come to our house a very noble French gentleman, called the Count de la Motte, and with him a German, the Baron de Lütterloh. My father used to take packages to Ostend and Calais for these two gentlemen, and perhaps I went to Paris once and saw the French queen.

"The squire of our town was Squire Weston of the Priory, who, with his brother, kept one of the genteelest houses in the country. He was churchwarden of our church, and much respected. Yes, but if you read the *Annual Register* of 1781, you will find that on the 18th July the sheriffs attended at the Tower of London to receive custody of a De la Motte, a prisoner charged with high treason. The fact is, this Alsatian nobleman being in difficulties in his own country (where he had commanded the Regiment Soubise), came to London, and under pretence of sending prints to France and Ostend, supplied the French Ministers with accounts of the movements of the English fleets and troops. His go-between was Lütterloh, a Brunswicker, who had been a crimping-agent, then a servant, who was a spy of France and Mr. Franklin, and who turned King's evidence on La Motte, and hanged him.

"This Lütterloh, who had been a crimping-agent for German troops during the American war, then a servant in London during the Gordon riots, then an agent for a spy, then a spy over a spy, I suspect to have been a consummate scoundrel, and doubly odious from speaking English with a German accent.

"What if he wanted to marry that charming girl, who lived with Mr. Weston at Winchelsea? Ha! I see a mystery here.

"What if this scoundrel, going to receive his pay from the English Admiral, with whom he was in communication at Portsmouth, happened to go on board the 'Royal George' the day she went down?

"As for George and Joseph Weston, of the Priory, I am sorry to say they were rascals too. They were tried for robbing the Bristol mail in 1780; and being acquitted for want of evidence were tried immediately after on another indictment for forgery—Joseph was acquitted, but George was capitally convicted. But this did

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not help poor Joseph. Before their trials, they and some others broke out of Newgate, and Joseph fired at, and wounded, a porter who tried to stop him, on Snow Hill. For this he was tried and found guilty on the Black Act, and hung along with his brother.

"Now, if I was an innocent participator in De la Motte's treasons, and the Westons' forgeries and robberies, what pretty scrapes I must have been in!

"I married the young woman, whom the brutal Lütterloh would have had for himself, and lived happy ever after."

Here, it will be seen, the general idea is very roughly sketched, and the sketch was not in all its parts carried out. Another letter, never sent to its destination, gives a somewhat later account of Denis,—

"My grandfather's name was Duval; he was a barber and perruquier by trade, and elder of the French Protestant church at Winchelsea. I was sent to board with his correspondent, a Methodist grocer, at Rye.

"These two kept a fishing-boat, but the fish they caught was many and many a barrel of Nantz brandy, which we landed—never mind where—at a place to us well known. In the innocence of my heart, I—a child—got leave to go out fishing. We used to go out at night and meet ships from the French coast.

> "I learned to scuttle a marlinspike,
> reef a lee-scupper,
> keelhaul a bowsprit

as well as the best of them. How well I remember the jabbering of the Frenchmen the first night as they handed the kegs over to us! One night we were fired into by His Majesty's revenue cutter 'Lynx.' I asked what those balls were fizzing in the water, &c.

"I wouldn't go on with the smuggling; being converted by Mr. Wesley, who came to preach to us at Rye—but that is neither here nor there. . . ."

In these letters neither "my mother" nor the Count de Saverne and his unhappy wife appear; while Agnes exists only as "that charming girl." Count de la Motte, the Baron de Lütterloh, and the Westons, seem to have figured foremost in the author's mind: they are historical characters. In the first letter, we are referred to the *Annual Register* for the story of De la Motte and Lütterloh: and this is what we read there,—

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"*January* 5, 1781.—A gentleman was taken into custody for treasonable practices, named Henry Francis de la Motte, which he bore with the title of baron annexed to it. He has resided in Bond Street, at a Mr. Otley's, a woollen draper, for some time.

"When he was going upstairs at the Secretary of State's office, in Cleveland Row, he dropped several papers on the staircase, which were immediately discovered by the messenger, and carried in with him to Lord Hillsborough. After his examination, he was committed a close prisoner for high treason to the Tower. The papers taken from him are reported to be of the highest importance. Among them are particular lists of every ship of force in any of our yards and docks, &c. &c.

"In consequence of the above papers being found, Henry Lütterloh, Esquire, of Wickham, near Portsmouth, was afterwards apprehended and brought to town. The messengers found Mr. Lütterloh ready booted to go a hunting. When he understood their business, he did not discover the least embarrassment, but delivered his keys with the utmost readiness. . . . Mr. Lütterloh is a German, and had lately taken a house at Wickham, within a few miles of Portsmouth; and as he kept a pack of hounds, and was considered as a good companion, he was well received by the gentlemen in the neighbourhood.

"*July* 14, 1781.—Mr. Lütterloh's testimony was of so serious a nature, that the court seemed in a state of astonishment during the whole of his long examination. He said that he embarked in a plot with the prisoner in the year 1778, to furnish the French Court with secret intelligence of the Navy; for which, at first, he received only eight guineas a month; the importance of his information appeared, however, so clear to the prisoner, that he shortly after allowed him fifty guineas a month, besides many valuable gifts; that, upon any emergency, he came post to town to Monsieur de la Motte, but common occurrences relative to their treaty, he sent by the post. He identified the papers found in his garden, and the seals, he said, were Monsieur de la Motte's, and well known in France. He had been to Paris by direction of the prisoner, and was closeted with Monsieur Sartine, the French Minister. He had formed a plan for capturing Governor Johnstone's squadron, for which he demanded 8,000 guineas, and a third share of the ships, to be divided amongst the prisoner, himself, and his friend in a certain office, but the French Court would not agree to yielding more than an eighth share of the squadron. After agreeing to enable the French to take the commodore, he went to Sir Hugh Palliser, and offered a plan to take the French,

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and to defeat his original project with which he had furnished the French Court.

"The trial lasted for thirteen hours, when the jury, after a short deliberation, pronounced the prisoner guilty, when sentence was immediately passed upon him; the prisoner received the awful doom (he was condemned to be hanged, drawn, and quartered), with great composure, but inveighed against Mr. Lütterloh in warm terms. . . . His behaviour throughout the whole of this trying scene exhibited a combination of manliness, steadiness, and presence of mind. He appeared at the same time polite, condescending, and unaffected, and, we presume, could never have stood so firm and collected at so awful a moment, if, when he felt himself fully convicted as a traitor to the State which gave him protection, he had not, however mistakenly, felt a conscious innocence within his own breast that he had devoted his life to the service of his country.

* * * * * *

"M. de la Motte was about five feet ten inches in height, fifty years of age, and of a comely countenance; his deportment was exceedingly genteel, and his eye was expressive of strong penetration. He wore a white cloth coat, and a linen waistcoat worked in tambour."—*Annual Register*, vol. xxiv. p. 184.

It is not improbable that from this narrative of a trial for high treason in 1781 the whole story radiated. These are the very men whom we have seen in Thackeray's pages; and it is a fine test of his insight and power to compare them as they lie embalmed in the *Annual Register*, and as they breathe again in "Denis Duval."* The part they were to have played in the story is already intelligible, all but the way in which they were to have confused the lives of Denis and his love.

* Among the notes there is a little chronological table of events as they occur—

"Blaise, born 1763.
Henriette de Barr was born in 1766–7.
Her father went to Corsica, '68.
Mother fled, '68.
Father killed at B., '69.
Mother died, '70.
Blaise turned out, '79.
Henriette Ἰφιγενία, '81.
La Motte's catastrophe, '82.
Rodney's action, '82."

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"'At least, Duval,' De la Motte said to me when I shook hands with him and with all my heart forgave him, 'mad and reckless as I have been and fatal to all whom I loved, I have never allowed the child to want, and have supported her in comfort when I myself was almost without a meal.'" What was the injury which Denis forgave with all his heart? Fatal to all whom he loved, there are evidences that De la Motte was to have urged Lütterloh's pretensions to Agnes: whose story at this period we find inscribed in the note-book in one word—"Henriette Iphigenia." For Agnes was christened Henriette originally, and Denis was called Blaise.

As for Monsieur Lütterloh, "that consummate scoundrel, and doubly odious from speaking English with a German accent"—having hanged De la Motte, while confessing that he had made a solemn engagement with him never to betray each other, and then immediately laying a wager that De la Motte *would* be hanged, having broken open a secretaire, and distinguished himself in various other ways—he seems to have gone to Winchelsea, where it was easy for him to threaten or cajole the Westons into trying to force Agnes into his arms. She was living with these people, and we know how they discountenanced her faithful affection for Denis. Overwrought by the importunities of Lütterloh and the Westons, she escaped to Doctor Barnard for protection; and soon unexpected help arrived. The De Viomesnils, her mother's relations, became suddenly convinced of the innocence of the Countess. Perhaps (and when we say perhaps, we repeat such hints of his plans as Mr. Thackeray uttered in conversation at his fireside) they knew of certain heritages to which Agnes would be entitled were her mother absolved: at any rate, they had reasons of their own for claiming her at this opportune moment—as they did. Agnes takes Doctor Barnard's advice and goes off to these prosperous relations, who, having neglected her so long, desire her so much. Perhaps Denis was thinking of the sad hour when he came home, long years afterwards, to find his sweetheart gone, when he wrote:—"O Agnes, Agnes! how the years roll away! What strange events have befallen us; what passionate griefs have we had to suffer; what a merciful Heaven has protected us, since that

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day when your father knelt over the little cot in which his child lay sleeping!"

At the time she goes home to France, Denis is far away fighting on board the "Arethusa," under his old captain, Sir Richard Pearson, who commanded the "Serapis" in the action with Paul Jones. Denis was wounded early in this fight, in which Pearson had to strike his own colours, almost every man on board being killed or hurt. Of Pearson's career, which Denis must have followed in after days, there is more than one memorandum in Mr. Thackeray's note-book:—

"'Serapis,' R. Pearson. 'Beatson's Memoirs.'

"*Gentleman's Magazine*, 49, pp. 484. Account of action with Paul Jones, 1779.

"*Gentleman's Magazine*, 502, pp. 84. Pearson knighted, 1780.

"Commanded the 'Arethusa' off Ushant, 1781, in Kempenfeldt's action. } 'Field of Mars,' art. Ushant."

And then follows the question—

"*Qy.* How did Pearson get away from Paul Jones?"

But before that is answered we will quote the "story of the disaster" as Sir Richard tells it, "in words nobler than any I could supply;" and, indeed, Mr. Thackeray seems to have thought much of the letter to the Admiralty Office, and to have found Pearson's character in it.

After some preliminary fighting—

"We dropt alongside of each other, head and stern, when the fluke of our spare anchor hooking his quarter, we became so close, fore and aft, that the muzzles of our guns touched each other's sides. In this position we engaged from half-past eight till half-past ten; during which time, from the great quantity and variety of combustible matter which they threw in upon our decks, chains, and, in short, every part of the ship, we were on fire no less than ten or twelve times in different parts of the ship, and it was with the greatest difficulty and exertion imaginable at times, that we were able to get it extinguished. At the same time the largest of the two frigates kept sailing round us the whole action and raking us fore and aft, by which means she killed or wounded almost every man on the quarter and main decks.

"About half-past nine, a cartridge of powder was set on fire,

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which, running from cartridge to cartridge all the way aft, blew up the whole of the people and officers that were quartered abaft the mainmast. . . . At ten o'clock they called for quarter from the ship alongside; hearing this, I called for the boarders and ordered them to board her, which they did; but the moment they were on board her they discovered a superior number laying under cover with pikes in their hands ready to receive them; our people retreated instantly into our own ship, and returned to their guns till past ten, when the frigate coming across our stern and pouring her broadside into us again, without our being able to bring a gun to bear on her, I found it in vain, and, in short, impracticable, from the situation we were in, to stand out any longer with the least prospect of success. I therefore struck. Our mainmast at the same time went by the board. . . .

"I am extremely sorry for the misfortune that has happened—that of losing His Majesty's ship I had the honour to command; but at the same time, I flatter myself with the hopes that their Lordships will be convinced that she has not been given away, but that on the contrary every exertion has been used to defend her."

The "Serapis" and the "Countess of Scarborough," after drifting about in the North Sea, were brought into the Texel by Paul Jones; when Sir Joseph Yorke, our ambassador at the Hague, memorialised their High Mightinesses the States-General of the Low Countries, requesting that these prizes might be given up. Their High Mightinesses refused to interfere.

Of course the fate of the "Serapis" was Denis's fate; and the question also is, how did *he* get away from Paul Jones? A note written immediately after the query suggests a hair-breadth escape for him after a double imprisonment.

"Some sailors are lately arrived from Amsterdam on board the 'Lætitia,' Captain March. They were taken out of the hold of a Dutch East Indiaman by the captain of the 'Kingston' privateer, who, having lost some of his people, gained some information of their fate from a music-girl, and had spirit enough to board the ship and search her. The poor wretches were all chained down in the hold, and but for this would have been carried to perpetual slavery."—*Gentleman's Magazine*, 50, pp. 101.

Do we see how truth and fiction were to have been married here? Suppose that Denis Duval, escaping from one

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imprisonment in Holland, fell into the snares of Dutch East Indiamen, or was kidnapped with the men of the "Kingston" privateer? Denis chained down in the hold, thinking one moment of Agnes and the garden wall which alone was too much to separate them, and at the next moment of how he was now to be carried to perpetual slavery, beyond hope. And then the music-girl; and the cheer of the "Kingston's" men as they burst into the hold and set the prisoners free. It is easy to imagine what those chapters would have been like.

At liberty, Denis was still kept at sea, where he did not rise to the heroic in a day, but progressed through all the commonplace duties of a young seaman's life, which we find noted down accordingly:—

"He must serve two years on board before he can be rated midshipman. Such volunteers are mostly put under the care of the gunner, who caters for them; and are permitted to walk the quarter-deck and wear the uniform from the beginning. When fifteen, and rated midshipmen, they form a mess with the mates. When examined for their commissions they are expected to know everything relative to navigation and seamanship, are strictly examined in the different sailings, working tides, days' works, and double-altitudes—and are expected to give some account of the different methods of finding the longitudes by a time-keeper and the lunar observations. In practical seamanship they must show how to conduct a ship from one place to another under every disadvantage of wind, tide, &c. After this, the candidate obtains a certificate from the captain, and his commission when he can get it."

Another note describes a personage whose acquaintance we have missed:—

"A seaman of the old school, whose hand was more familiar with the tar-brush than with Hadley's quadrant, who had peeped into the mysteries of navigation as laid down by J. Hamilton Moore, and who acquired an idea of the rattletraps and rigging of a ship through the famous illustrations which adorn the pages of Darcy Lever."

Denis was a seaman in stirring times. "The year of which we treat," says the *Annual Register* for 1779, "presented the most awful appearance of public affairs which

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perhaps this country had beheld for many ages;" and Duval had part in more than one of the startling events which succeeded each other so rapidly in the wars with France and America and Spain. He was destined to come into contact with Major André, whose fate excited extraordinary sympathy at the time: Washington is said to have shed tears when he signed his death-warrant. It was on the 2nd of October, 1780, that this young officer was executed. A year later, and Denis was to witness the trial and execution of one whom he knew better and was more deeply interested in, De la Motte. The courage and nobleness with which he met his fate moved the sympathy of Duval, whom he had injured, as well as of most of those who saw him die. Denis has written concerning him:—"Except my kind namesake, the captain and admiral, this was the first *gentleman* I ever met in intimacy, a gentleman with many a stain,—nay, crime to reproach him, but not all lost, I hope and pray. I own to having a kindly feeling towards that fatal man."

Lütterloh's time had not yet come; but besides that we find him disposed of with the "Royal George" in the first-quoted letter, an entry in the note-book unites the fate of the bad man with that of the good ship.*

Meanwhile, the memorandum "Rodney's action, 1782," indicates that Duval was to take part in our victory over the French fleet commanded by the Count de Grasse, who was himself captured with the "Ville de Paris" and four other ships. "De Grasse with his suite landed on Southsea Common, Portsmouth. They were conducted in carriages to the 'George,' where a most sumptuous dinner had been procured for the Count and his suite, by Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Parkes, who entertained him and his officers at his own expense." Here also was something for Denis to see; and in this same autumn came on the trial of the two Westons, when Denis was to be the means—unconsciously—of bringing his old enemy, Joseph Weston, to punishment. There are two notes to this effect.

* Contemporary accounts of the foundering of the "Royal George" represent her crowded with people from the shore. We have seen how Lütterloh was among these, having come on board to receive the price of his treason.

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"1782–3. Jo. Weston, always savage against Blaise, fires on him in Cheapside.

"*The Black Act* is 9 George II. c. 22. The preamble says:—'Whereas several ill-designing and disorderly persons have associated themselves under the name of Blacks, and entered into confederacies to support and assist one another in stealing and destroying deer, robbing warrens and fish-ponds.' . . . It then goes on to enact that 'if any person or persons shall wilfully or maliciously shoot at any person in any dwelling-house or other place, he shall suffer death as in cases of felony without benefit of the clergy.'"

A Joseph Weston was actually found guilty under the Black Act, of firing at and wounding a man on Snow Hill, and was hanged with his brother. Mr. Thackeray's note-book refers him to "The Westons in 'Session Papers' 1782, pp. 463, 470, 473;" to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1782; to "Genuine Memoirs of George and Joseph Weston, 1782;" and *Notes and Queries*, Series I. vol. x.*

The next notes (in order of time) concern a certain very disinterested action of Duval's:—

"*Deal Riots*, 1783.

"DEAL.—Here has been a great scene of confusion, by a party of Colonel Douglas's Light Dragoons, sixty in number, who entered the town in the dead of the night in aid to the excise officers, in order to break open the stores and make seizures: but the smugglers, who are never unprepared, having taken the alarm, mustered together, and a most desperate battle ensued."

Now old Duval, the perruquier, as we know, belonged to the great Mackerel party, or smuggling conspiracy, which extended all along the coast; and frequent allusion has been made to his secret stores, and to the profits of his so-called *fishing* expeditions. Remembering what has been written of this

* These notes also appear in the same connection:—

"*Horse-Stealers.*—One Saunders was committed to Oxford gaol for horse-stealing, who appears to have belonged to a gang, part of whom stole horses in the north counties, and the other part in the south, and about the midland counties they used to meet and exchange.—*Gentleman's Magazine*, 39, 165.

"1783. *Capital Convictions.*—At the Spring Assizes, 1783, 119 prisoners received sentence of Death."

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gentleman, we can easily imagine the falsehoods, tears, lying asseverations of poverty and innocence which old Duval must have uttered on the terrible night when the excise officers visited him. But his exclamations were to no purpose, for it is a fact that when Denis saw what was going on he burst out with the truth, and though he knew it was his own inheritance he was giving up, he led the officers right away to the hoards they were seeking.

His conduct on this occasion Denis has already referred to where he says:—"There were matters connected with this story regarding which I *could* not speak. . . . Now they are secrets no more. That old society of smugglers is dissolved long ago: nay, I shall have to tell presently how I helped myself to break it up." And therewith all old Duval's earnings, all Denis's fortune that was to be, vanished; but of course Denis prospered in his profession, and had no need of unlawful gains.*

But very sad times intervened between Denis and prosperity. He was to be taken prisoner by the French, and to fret many long years away in one of their arsenals. At last the Revolution broke out, and he may have been given up, or —thanks to his foreign tongue and extraction—found means to escape. Perhaps he went in search of Agnes, whom we know he never forgot, and whose great relations were now in trouble; for the Revolution which freed him was terrible to "aristocrats."

This is nearly all the record we have of this part of Denis's life, and of the life which Agnes led while she was away from him. But perhaps it was at this time that Duval saw Marie Antoinette;† perhaps he found Agnes, and helped to get her

* Notices of Sussex smuggling (says the note-book) are to be found in vol. x. of *Sussex Archæological Collections*, 69, 94. Reference is also made to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. viii. pp. 292, 172.

† The following memoranda appear in the note-book:—

"Marie Antoinette was born on the 2nd November, 1755, and her saint's day is the FÊTE DES MORTS.

"In the Corsican expedition the Légion de Lorraine was under the Baron de Viomesnil. He emigrated at the commencement of the Revolution, took an active part in the army of Condé, and in the emigration, returned with

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away: or had Agnes already escaped to England, and was it in the old familiar haunts—Farmer Perreau's *Columbarium*, where the pigeons were that Agnes loved; the Rectory garden basking in the autumn evening; the old wall and the pear-tree behind it; the plain from whence they could see the French lights across the Channel; the little twinkling window in a gable of the Priory-house, where the light used to be popped out at nine o'clock—that Denis and Agnes first met after their long separation?

However that may have been, we come presently upon a note of "a tailor contracts to supply three superfine suits for 11*l.* 11*s.* (*Gazetteer* and *Daily Advertiser*);" and also of a villa at Beckenham, with "four parlours, eight bed-rooms, stables, two acres of garden, and fourteen acres of meadow, let for 70*l.* a year," which may have been the house the young people first lived in after they were married. Later, they moved to Fareport, where, as we read, the admiral is weighed along with his own pig. But he cannot have given up the service for many years after his marriage, for he writes:—"T'other day, when we took over the King of France to Calais (H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence being in command), I must needs have a postchaise from Dover to look at that old window in the Priory-house at Winchelsea. I went through the old wars, despairs, tragedies. I sighed as vehemently after forty years as though the *infandi dolores* were fresh upon me, as though I were the schoolboy trudging back to his task and taking a last look at his dearest joy."

"And who, pray, was Agnes?" he writes elsewhere. "To-day her name is Agnes Duval, and she sits at her work-table hard by. The lot of my life has been changed by knowing her—to win such a prize in life's lottery has been given but to very few. What I have done—of any worth—has been done by trying to deserve her." . . . . "*Monsieur mon fils*,"—(this is to his boy)—"if ever you marry, and have a son, I hope the little chap will have an honest man for a grand-father, and that you will be able to say, 'I loved him,' when

Louis XVIII., followed him to Gand, and was made marshal and peer of France after '15.

. "Another Vi. went with Rochambeau to America in 1780."

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the daisies cover me." Once more of Agnes he writes:— "When my ink is run out, and my little tale is written, and yonder church that is ringing to seven o'clock prayers shall toll for a certain D. D., you will please, good neighbours, to remember that I never loved any but yonder lady, and keep a place by Darby for Joan when her turn shall arrive."

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THE

WRITINGS OF W. M. THACKERAY.

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THE WRITINGS

OF

W. M. THACKERAY.

BY LESLIE STEPHEN.

IN attempting a brief survey of Mr. Thackeray's literary career, I find it necessary to guard myself from the outset against some possible misconceptions. Considerations of a purely personal character impose on me certain reserves which would be out of place in an independent critic. If I were writing about Sir Walter Scott, I should endeavour to give some estimate of the intrinsic value of his writings and of their permanent place in literature. I should further endeavour to show how his literary utterance might be regarded as the natural outcome of his personal career. Biography and criticism should go hand in hand; for we cannot thoroughly understand the author without in some degree knowing the man. Each point of view leads to an imperfect appreciation, even of the facts which are visible from that aspect alone, until it has been in some degree corrected and supplemented by the other. But I cannot here speak freely either as a biographer or a critic. Mr. Thackeray intimated to his daughters during his life that he wished them to have no concern in any biography of their father. His known wishes were necessarily regarded as final by them and by those who are connected with him through them. The family representatives of an eminent man may often feel it to be not merely a right but a duty to publish his life; but it is a duty for

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the discharge of which they are responsible to their own consciences and not to the public. The decision must rest upon the particular circumstances of the case, and involves considerations which can be fully known to none but the persons immediately concerned. If they decide upon silence, the same reasons which make silence desirable may also make it undesirable to publish the grounds of their decision. Their conduct cannot be pronounced upon by a tribunal which is unprovided with the necessary materials for judgment. It is enough, therefore, to say that Mr. Thackeray's representatives not only accept—as they would in any case be bound to accept—but fully approve of his decision. They cannot discuss the question whether it was prompted by a conviction that they would be placed in a false position as biographers; by a sense of the difficulty of writing the life without violating private confidence; or by any more special considerations. This alone may be said; and I say it with the most entire conviction of its truth: Nothing could be told of Mr. Thackeray's private life by those who have the fullest means of knowledge which would not confirm the highest estimate derivable from his writings of the tenderness of his heart and the moral worth of his nature; and all that could be told would tend to justify the profound affection with which they cherish his memory.

After Mr. Thackeray's death I became the husband of his youngest daughter, and am therefore bound by the obligation of which I have been speaking. My connection with his family disqualifies me still farther from speaking as a critic. Though personally unknown to Mr. Thackeray, I have looked at him through the eyes of those who loved him best. His image is indissolubly associated with the most cherished memories of my life, and as the years have taken away the living witnesses of the past, such memories grow more sacred, and the fear of touching them with a profane hand gains additional strength.

I have said enough to explain why I cannot ascend the critical chair. I cannot, even if I would, rise above the atmosphere of personal association. No one would have scorned more heartily than Mr. Thackeray himself the conventional

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biographer's eulogy, the attempt to draw a portrait in rose-colour, or, indeed, the deviation by a single hair's-breadth from the severest lines of strict historical fidelity. On the other hand, I cannot calmly sum up his merits and defects, and point out with the easy impartiality of a stranger the precise points at which I perceive an intellectual shortcoming or an excess or defect in some element of character. I leave that function to others, and there are plenty of critics far more competent than I to discharge it effectually. Reticence upon such topics implies absolute silence upon many points which would otherwise naturally suggest themselves for consideration. Yet there is still something which may be said without impropriety; and which I shall endeavour to say in the following pages. I shall state no biographical facts which are not already public property, and draw no inferences as to character which are not to be justified from those facts and from the writings themselves. I shall not endeavour to sum up my impressions of the balance of good and bad in the writings, or to assign to Mr. Thackeray his final place in English literature. I shall endeavour to speak simply as an interpreter; I shall try to point out what are the aspects of life and society which occupied the most prominent place in his mind; and in which writings they are most clearly expressed; to indicate certain points of resemblance and contrast between his work and that of his contemporaries in the same departments of literature, though without entering upon the question of relative merit; and to bring out certain general modes in which his literary career was probably influenced by various external circumstances. In doing this much, it will of course be impossible not to indicate in some degree, even if the indication be unconscious, what is my general impression as to the value of the writings under consideration. I can have no scruple in admitting that I estimate them very highly. I happened to become familiar with "Vanity Fair" at the time when a young man is most impressible by the influence of an eminent contemporary. For many years, that and others of Mr. Thackeray's writings, as they became known to me, were the most familiar companions of my leisure hours. I could have passed a far

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better examination in the fates of the Sedleys and Osbornes, and the Pendennis family, than in those of certain other personages of less fictitious origin, whose histories were supposed to be at the fingers' ends of every university student. Indeed, my familiarity with the author was so close, many years before I had any knowledge of the man, that upon that ground alone I should feel impartiality to be a difficult duty. To criticise a book it is necessary to read it with some degree of conscious reflection. After surrendering oneself, at the age which precedes all reflection, to "Robinson Crusoe" or "Ivanhoe," it requires a great effort to judge of them as of acquaintances made with one's eyes open. I have something of the same feeling for "Vanity Fair," though I read it first at an age when reflection was at least dawning. As I shall not even make the effort to be impartial in this latter case, I shall also pronounce no judgment; but neither shall I try to suppress all manifestations of feeling.

I have, however, said enough upon this topic. Mr. Thackeray, like every other great writer, is, after all, his own best interpreter. The reader will gain infinitely more from a few pages of his vivid portraiture of men and things than from volumes of disquisition about them, even if the disquisition were that of a perfectly independent and competent observer. The critic's position is at the highest a very subordinate and rather unsatisfactory one. But it may be of some secondary interest to one who has already studied the original, to read also a few of the obvious thoughts which they suggest, brought together in something like definite and articulate shape. That is all which I can really attempt in the following pages.

Thackeray's writings, like the writings of all eminent novelists, contain a large autobiographical element. Every man who puts his heart into his work must necessarily draw upon his personal experience; and the writer of realistic fiction is especially tempted to give not merely the essence of his experience of life and manners, but that specific experience itself under some thin ostensible disguise. Thackeray was a thorough realist; he always aimed at giving an

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accurate portraiture of men and women of the day: he not only refrained from the historical romance, but from descriptions of the classes of society with which he was not actually familiar. He laid aside the original plan of "Pendennis," as he tells us in the preface, because it involved the introduction of "ruffians and gaol-birds,"—a set of people of whom he had no direct knowledge. All his characters, with very few exceptions, are the English ladies and gentlemen of whom abundant specimens are to be found in the clubs and at the dinner-tables which he himself frequented. If he occasionally glances at the basement-story or looks at the man behind the shop-counter, his Jeameses and Morgans and Ganns play a subsidiary part in his fictions, as they did in his own life. If in "Esmond" he goes back for a century or two, he still deals with the ancestors to whom the Pendennises and Warringtons bear a very strong family resemblance. We should scarcely be surprised at meeting Major Pendennis in our club, and therefore we should not be astonished to find that he had, in fact, walked from some club into the book. But it was also, I believe, Thackeray's principle, and it was certainly the principle which, consciously or unconsciously, guided his practice, that direct portraiture from living models was a mistake. However close the realism, the truth should be generic, not individual. If Major Pendennis had been the portrait of a real personage, he would have interfered with the general effect, as a bit of illusory representation destroys the harmony of a picture. The conventional curtain in the background of a portrait could not appear to be a real curtain without injury to the rest of the performance. The practice, too, is demoralising. When a novelist defends himself for some extravagance on the ground of its truth to nature, meaning by that phrase that it is copied from some particular reality, he shows that he does not understand his art. A curious trait of character or an external oddity interests us in real life, precisely because we do not see the reason for it. But that for which we can see no reason in a work of art is superfluous, and ought to be removed. Only those remarkable features should be introduced which in some way contribute to the desired effect, and the artists who paint too

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closely from life inevitably lose sight of this condition, and fall into the grotesque and discordant.

Such reasons, at least, might be suggested in defence of Thackeray's opinion, and corroborated by his practice. Very few, if any, of his characters were downright portraits, though many of course must have been modelled to some extent upon real persons. This is true especially of the character whom we should be most interested in discovering. It would be wrong to identify Thackeray himself with any of his creations. In his later works, he speaks in the person of Pendennis, and there can be no doubt that Pendennis comes nearest to being an embodiment of his own character. Pendennis, as the reader may discover, was very nearly a contemporary of Thackeray's. He was keenly interested, for example, in the question of Catholic Emancipation, and wrote some of his earliest poetry upon that text at the age of sixteen. Thackeray was also sixteen, and, for anything I know, may have been a rival poet, at a period (1827) when the agitation was coming to its height. But Pendennis, though an excellent mask for Thackeray at a later period, is not himself Thackeray in any precise sense. He is a schoolfellow, a friend, or rather, a type of the class to which Thackeray and his friends belonged; and thus he may frequently express the thoughts and share the views of his creator. Mr. Forster has shown, in his Life of Dickens, that some of the most vivid passages of "David Copperfield" were autobiography disguised—direct transcripts of personal experience, turned to admirable account with force which disarms any criticism as to the general soundness of the method. There is no reason to trace any such intimate connection between the specific incidents of Thackeray's own life and the personal history of Pendennis, whilst in some respects there is a very marked divergence. But, putting aside any question of a downright reproduction of fact, there is still a very large element of what one may call generalised autobiography in this and in others of Thackeray's works. He is not only present, as every author must be present, in his writings, but is constantly reproducing the vein of thought and sentiment which was closely associated with the different circumstances of his life. The atmosphere of his early days

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still tinges the representation of similar passages in the history of his characters. If we cannot argue to specific facts or to the characters of the persons with whose life his own was blended, we can have little difficulty in perceiving how he must have thought and felt about the various surroundings of his childhood and youth.

Thackeray was born July 18, 1811; the son of an Indian civil servant, who did not long survive the birth of the child. He was brought home from India at a period defined by a passage in his lecture upon George III. "When I first saw England," he says, "she was in mourning for the young Princess Charlotte, the hope of the empire" (she died Nov. 6, 1817). "I came from India as a child, and our ship touched at an island on the way home, where my black servant took me over rocks and hills until we reached a garden where we saw a man walking. 'That is he,' said the black man: 'that is Bonaparte! He eats three sheep every day, and all the little children he can lay hands on.'" Thackeray goes on to tell us how, with the same servant, he peeped through the colonnade at Carlton House and saw the abode of the great Prince Regent. The poor Prince Regent little knew what a portrait the small satirist in petticoats who was peering at his palace would make in after years of "the first gentleman of Europe." The regency has passed away, and George IV. is gathered to his fathers, and even Waterloo is beginning to retire into history, and to fill a few paragraphs in the same volumes with Fontenoy and Blenheim. But the child grew up amidst fresh memories of Waterloo and Shaw the Lifeguardsman, and "up guards and at 'em," and all the half-absurd and half-heroic traditions dear to the burly blustering patriots of the time. He might see with his own eyes the splendid dandies who played billiards with Rawdon Crawley and the solemn young statesmen who imitated Canning like Rawdon's brother Pitt, and compare them with the old-fashioned Anglo-Indian society, which had doubtless as many foibles as its rivals, but which could at times produce such admirable types of heroic simplicity as he has drawn in Colonel Newcome. The boy, doubtless, cared a great deal more for the heroes of his school than for the great world

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which was roaring outside the little cloister of Charterhouse Square. He is fond of dwelling upon the veneration with which the small fry of a public school look up to the "cock of the school," a being so splendid in their eyes as to eclipse all the heroes of the outside world, the rival, if not the superior, of the head-master himself in general accomplishment, and so imposing physically that they are amazed when they meet him in after life and find him to fall short of seven feet in height. His kindly feeling for the schoolboy is constantly coming up in his books; it is indicated by his warm recommendation of the great duty of administering "tips"—a duty which he took care to discharge effectually in his own person —and by the warm sympathy with which he always describes the delight of ingenuous boyhood in play or pantomime. The sympathy for boyish happiness is perhaps to be reckoned as part of the marked tenderness which he everywhere shows for children in innumerable sketches with pen and pencil. It scarcely proves much as to his own experience. Mr. Venables, one of his schoolfellows, has observed (in a letter published by Mr. Trollope) that Thackeray's feelings about his own school life underwent a marked change. In his early books he dwells upon the brutality of the ordinary schoolboy, whilst in "The Newcomes," and elsewhere, he speaks with evident fondness of the old "Grey Friars." The change, I imagine, is not without precedent. Without being a saint, one may forget some childish resentments, and cling to pleasanter memories of kindness and gleams of boyish sunshine. I must leave it to philosophers to settle which view of our childhood is likely to be the most correct: whether we simply ignore our early sufferings when we grow older, because the recollection is painful; or whether children are happier than they know, and their unconscious enjoyment is only estimated at its true value when it is finally lost. Certain it is that many men resemble Thackeray in dwelling more fondly upon their school days in proportion to the remoteness of the memory. It is also pretty certain that a boy who has the sensitiveness of genius, and who is not much of a hand at athletics, has to pass many unpleasant times at a public school, even of the best regulated kind. The Charterhouse is, I am informed, an admirable

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school, but if it had been free from all abuses then it would have been a miracle; and, indeed, if it is absolutely free from them now, I can only say that I congratulate its authorities with all my heart. In "Pendennis" Thackeray makes some significant remarks. "And, by the way," he exclaims, "ye tender mothers and sober fathers of Christian families, a prodigious thing that theory of life is as orally learnt at a great public school. Why, if you could hear those boys of fourteen, who blush before mothers, and sneak off in silence in the presence of their daughters, talking among each other —it would be the woman's turn to blush then." It may be, he adds, that the boy has not lost that innocence which he had from "heaven, which is our home," but "the shades of the prison-house are closing very fast over him, and we are doing as much as possible to corrupt him." In the "Shabby Genteel Story," written some ten years earlier, there is a more unsparing denunciation. "I should like to know how many such scoundrels" (as Brandon, just described as an "idler, a spendthrift, and a glutton") "our Universities have turned out, and how much ruin has been caused by that accursed system which is called in England 'the education of a gentleman.' Go, my son, for ten years to a public school; that 'world in miniature;' learn to 'fight for yourself' against the time when your real studies shall begin." You will have learnt to play cricket, to write Latin verses, and construe Greek plays; and, in addition, to consider Divine service the "vainest parade in the world;" to be ashamed of your father, if he is a grocer; to forget the ties and natural affections of home; and (to use the phrase which was not yet famous) to be a thorough snob. "All this does the public-school and college boy learn; and woe be to his knowledge!"

No one will doubt that this represents a genuine feeling; nor do I believe that anyone who has been through a public school can seriously doubt that it also contains some very grave truths. Of course it is not, nor would Thackeray have maintained it to be, the whole truth. But there is more in it, I fancy, than would be admitted by some people who agree with Mr. Thomas Hughes's complaint (in his admirable "Tom Brown's Schooldays") that Thackeray sanctioned the common

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"cant" about the brutality of boyish fights. Mr. Hughes is no doubt thinking of the passage which culminates in the fight between Dobbin and Cuff in "Vanity Fair," partly anticipated in the early story of "Mr. and Mrs. Frank Berry." "Take that, you little devil," says Cuff to young Osborne, bringing down a heavy cricket-stump for the second time on the little wretch's hand, for the crime of accidentally breaking a smuggled bottle of rum-shrub. Dobbin strongly resents this licensed torture, and wins a victory over Cuff worthy of Tom Brown himself. But as tyranny does not always meet poetical justice at school or elsewhere, Thackeray regards the appeal to fists as more likely to serve the oppressor than his victim. I am much inclined to be of his opinion; but if Mr. Hughes takes a different view of the general tendency of brute force from that to which I should be inclined, it is possibly because he would have had an incomparably better chance than I of being the administrator rather than the recipient of this variety of rough justice.

In any case, one cannot doubt that Thackeray was deeply impressed by the brutal side of our public school system, though, at the time, he probably took such things, like other schoolboys, as part of the established order of the universe, and enjoyed life as well as his comrades. Nor, again, can we doubt that, like Dobbin, he found comfort occasionally in following Prince Ahmed to the cave of the Fairy Peribanou or picking up diamonds in the valley with Sindbad. Pendennis, too, devoured all the novels, plays, and poetry on which he could lay hands; and in the "Roundabout Papers" we have a fond enumeration of the heroes of those early days. There is a page of the Latin Grammar illustrated or defaced by Thaddeus of Warsaw and Sir William Wallace bestriding the fallen body of Sir Aymer de Valence. The "Scottish Chiefs" and the "Mysteries of Udolpho" were familiar friends; and above all, Sir Walter, "the kindly, the generous, the pure," was the "constant benefactor of our youth." And, besides Ivanhoe, and Locksley, and Saladin, and Claverhouse, and Dugald Dalgetty, there were the Leatherstocking, and those other Transatlantic heroes who, to his taste, were fully equal to Scott's heroes. "Roderick Random," too, comes in for a

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good word, though Fielding, we must suppose, was a rather later acquaintance. In such early times, the taste, if genuine, is rather undiscriminating; and it is enough to infer that Thackeray's appetite for literature of the kind which a pedagogue regards as illegitimate was a good deal more vigorous than his love of the orthodox Greek and Latin classics. It is plain enough that he never became a scholar of the accepted type; and he takes the opportunity to confess at Athens ("Cornhill to Cairo"), that he was "idle at school and did not know Greek," whilst accompanying the confession by some characteristic irony upon the occasional dulness of first-class men.

Thackeray in fact was not of the wood from which that kind of Mercury is carved. Our Universities have merits which I should be the last to deny, and indeed would gladly proclaim, were there any reason to suppose that those merits would be forgotten for want of able and energetic trumpeters. Cambridge, in particular, has "produced" not only many great men, but even more than her share of great poets. Perhaps, however, it would be wiser not to inquire too particularly what is in this case meant by "production." Milton, as I understand Professor Masson to say, was probably not flogged at Christ's, and he wrote a magnificent poem as a college exercise: but Milton remarks with more force than politeness that the University habitually keeps "the coarser stuff" strongly in her stomach, but "the better she is ever kecking at and is queasy." Other poets have been equally ungrateful. Dryden unkindly sneered at Cambridge; Gray, who knew it much better at a later period, hated it with proportionate energy, and his poetic vigour was only not extinguished by its influence; as for Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Byron in the generation which preceded Thackeray's, the only difficulty is to say which was least influenced by the studies of the place. In fact, a university may be admirably adapted for its own purposes, and especially for turning out accurate scholars and mathematicians, without being very congenial to men of creative genius in art or poetry. Industry, docility, a capacity for running in the accepted grooves are virtues which necessarily have a disproportionate value in

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a student's career, and are not always associated with the artistic temperament. Moreover the studies at Cambridge in Thackeray's time (though not in his time alone) were stamped by a singular narrowness. The good old classics and mathematics were supposed to exhaust all possible educational studies. Unless a man were a predestined wrangler or a scholar in the peculiar Cambridge sense—a nice student of grammatical *minutiæ*—his talents, whatever they might be, could hardly be turned to account. A Porson or a Newton would still succeed, but a philosopher or a poet would be regarded as a harmless eccentric, or be rewarded with the half-comic honour of a prize poem. Thackeray was almost ludicrously disqualified for struggles in such an arena. He had not the industry—the power of plodding against the collar which wins so many successes at Cambridge for characters typified by "Snick, the Westmoreland man." ("Character Sketches.") I will not inquire whether genius is naturally allied with incapacity for methodical labour or be—as some people have chosen to maintain—a boundless capacity for taking pains; at least it is frequently associated with an indisposition to run in the regular traces. A man who could prefer "Tom Jones" to Newton's "Principia," who would rather scribble poetry than practise the art of Latin verses, and would perhaps prefer to any of these occupations some of the multitudinous forms of doing nothing, was clearly not the man to succeed in triposes and be a favourite of "coaches." The awful dignity of the Master of the College would not suggest to him the possibility of some day climbing by hard labour to that sublime eminence; but rather a motive for some of the endless caricatures which were succeeding "Thaddeus of Warsaw" on fly-leaves and title-pages of his library.

What Thackeray gained from the University was clearly not that education which, according to the "don" theory, is the final cause of the institution. He doubtless enjoyed the life after the fashion of Pendennis and his friends. I have heard many men say that their school life has been wretched; but it is rare to find any man who does not look back with fondness to his University days. What period can be so pleasant

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as that at which a clever lad is just beginning to take himself seriously; when he can set up as a connoisseur in art and literature, or sport or cookery, on the strength of a month's apprenticeship; when he is ready to pronounce an offhand judgment with the air of an expert upon the points of philosophy, theology, or politics which puzzle older brains; when he becomes a celebrated orator on the strength of a speech at the Union, and fancies that the Prime Minister has always an eye upon the heroes of that admirable society; when he worships and is worshipped with a fervour and simplicity unknown in later life; when his faculties of enjoyment are at their keenest and he has not yet felt the twinges of an approaching Nemesis? The sheer joy of existence is at its height; and the young athlete is stripping for the great race of life in the exulting and buoyant spirit which can never return when he has stumbled and wandered from the track and known defeat and disappointment and utter weariness.

Some such feeling is, I think, reflected in Thackeray's references to University life; but it is plain that he felt himself to be an outsider as regards the normal student's career. The little undergraduates' paper in which he first saw himself in print is remarkable only for its title, *The Snob*, and reveals nothing of his character. His Cambridge life came to a speedy end, and he went to Weimar, and afterwards to Paris, with the intention of becoming an artist. We are beginning to hold that a gentleman may become an artist without derogation from his dignity; but in Thackeray's day a good many respectable relatives would probably regard his choice of a profession pretty much as Hobson Newcome looked upon the similar choice of his nephew, Clive. "I don't care what a fellow is if he is a good fellow," said that judicious banker; "but a painter! hang it, a painter's no trade at all—I don't fancy seeing one of our family sticking up pictures for sale." I do not know whether the case is altered; but until a very recent time, an undergraduate would as little have contemplated the possibility of becoming an artist by profession as the possibility of becoming a billiard-marker. I do not mean that he would have placed the two occupations in the same category; but that an artistic career was regarded as something altogether

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abnormal—as belonging to a different social system, not necessarily inferior, but entirely apart from that which bounded the aspirations of more than ninety-nine in a hundred University students. Thackeray, having at the time a sufficient income, thought that he could afford to gratify his own inclinations, even though they led to so eccentric a course of conduct. His judgment was probably sound; but he could have little anticipation of what was actually before him. The life in Germany and France doubtless opened his eyes to many things, and gave him, as it were, a standing point outside the ordinary British conventions. From Germany, indeed, he does not appear to have brought back much. He went there as a lad of nineteen; and was probably not prepared in any way to catch the contagion of German thought. At Cambridge there was not even that kind of intellectual fermentation which was making Oxford the centre of a great religious movement. Some young men, known to Thackeray then or in later life, such as Maurice and Sterling, who had sat at the feet of Coleridge, would have gone to Germany as eager pilgrims anxious to know what answers could be drawn from the oracles of philosophy to the questions which were perplexing their minds. But that was not Thackeray's temper. He might indeed pronounce his *Virgilium vidi tantum*. He saw the great demi-god Goethe, and has recorded his impressions in a letter published by Mr. Lewes. The youth evidently knew that he was looking upon one of the greatest of literary heroes; but he does not seem to have been a very ardent worshipper. The version of the "Sorrows of Werther" has not much significance in this respect; but such significance as it has is of the negative kind.

> "Charlotte, having seen his body
> Borne before her on a shutter,
> Like a well-conducted person
> Went on cutting bread-and-butter."

That is not the parody of a reverent disciple; but Wertherism was of course dead years before this, and represented a long past mood of its great originator. Germany is chiefly represented in Thackeray by the little Court of Pumpernickel,

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fully described in "Vanity Fair," and occasionally cropping up elsewhere. The humours of the quaint old-world little place, with its sham Versailles or "Monblaisir," its army consisting chiefly of a band which did duty on the stage of the famous theatre, and a numerous staff of officers commanding three or four sentries; its miniature Court torn by those desperate intrigues of the Lederlung and the Strumpff factions, which were fomented by the diplomatic malice of Monsieur de Macabau and the stupid insular arrogance of Tapeworm, amused his fancy considerably, and suggested some good-humoured caricatures. But more important aspects of German life and thought were not revealed to him.

His familiarity with French life—much closer and more prolonged—was a far more important factor in his intellectual development. He was growing into manhood, and, indeed, before he had done with Paris, was a father of a family and a member of the literary profession. He had gathered much of the experience which is embodied in his books. The adventures of Philip give us a glimpse of the kind of life which must have been led by many of his companions and of which he was more than a spectator. He must have seen something of the genuine old Bohemia. "The life of the young artist here," he writes, "is the easiest, merriest, dirtiest existence possible;" and he describes the wonderful appearance of the young Frenchman who would pawn his coat to go to a carnival ball, and walk abroad cheerfully in his blouse for six weeks till he had redeemed the absent garment. Given a young Englishman, placed by fate amidst the strictest sect of the Pharisees, but endowed by nature with the heartiest appreciation of art and most vigorous scorn for humbug, we can picture to some extent the natural result of plunging him amidst gay, art-loving, clear-brained, brilliant sceptical Frenchmen. "How much superiority is there in French society over our own; how much better is social happiness understood; how much more manly equality is there between Frenchman and Frenchman, than between rich and poor in our own country, with all our superior wealth, instruction, and political freedom! There is amongst the humblest a gaiety, cheerfulness, politeness, and sobriety, to

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which in England no class can show a parallel." Such remarks do not, perhaps, now strike us as very novel, but they represent what must have come upon Thackeray himself as a discovery. The "Paris Sketch Book," from which I have quoted, is a fragmentary collection of miscellaneous articles which tells less than we might have wished to know. It was published in 1840 with a characteristic dedication to the tailor who had shown a noble confidence in his solvency. Though starting with the proper description of the journey to Paris, in the pre-railroad days when twenty-five hours in a lumbering diligence intervened between Boulogne and Paris, it immediately becomes a miscellaneous collection of odds and ends, criticisms of art, literature, and politics, mixed with scraps of stories more or less imitated from French originals. The second chapter introduces us at once to an anecdote which, with some variation, was afterwards recounted by Amory to the Chevalier Strong in "Pendennis." Anything, therefore, like a systematic account of French impressions is wanting; and yet there is much in it which is significant. One remark which suggests itself is that Thackeray, though he acquired a certain cosmopolitan feeling, was still in some respects, and, indeed, remained to the end of his life, a thorough John Bull. Nobody, indeed, could be more keenly sensitive to the narrow prejudices and absurdities of his beloved countrymen; but it is really quite as necessary for effective satire as for effective eulogy that one should be to some extent in sympathy with the objects of one's satire. You must be capable of sharing the prejudices and the weaknesses, though capable also of getting beyond them. We perceive, in fact, when we read Thackeray's sketches of the French, and it is equally true of his sketches of the Irish, that whilst he can appreciate and even envy the good qualities of an alien race, he does not lose sight of the fact that they are aliens. They enable him to see the weak side of his own national qualities, but they also make him sensible that those qualities are very deeply ingrained in his character. "Do you think a Frenchman your equal?" he asks in the "Snob Papers." "You don't, you gallant British snob, you know you don't; no more perhaps does the snob your humble

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servant." When he first studied in Paris, it was still quivering from the revolution of 1830. Thackeray describes the *fêtes* of July, as he saw them in 1839; and his point of view is characteristic. The celebration is the "humbugging anniversary of a humbug." The feeling of loyalty is as dead as old Charles X.; there is not a man in France who cares sixpence for Louis Philippe or his dynasty; and yet here are cannons firing, and squibs and crackers blazing and fizzing, and fountains running wine, and kings making speeches, and subjects crawling up greasy *mâts de Cocagne* in token of gratitude. Surely the French beat all the nations of the world for sheer humbug, and their revolutionary history should be written rather by Dickens or Theodore Hook than by Carlyle, and no one but a Rabelais could do justice to the last ten years. And so he continues ridiculing the sham loyalty, sham glory, sham liberty, and sham justice, and Monsieur Victor Hugo's "crackbrained verses" to the Citizen King; and suggesting by way of moral that as in '90 the Cromwell-Grandison prepared the way for Robespierre, so in '30 he is preparing the way for——but the editor of the *Bungay Beacon* declines to publish the conclusion. Thackeray could see, in spite of all *doctrinaires*, that the glorious British Constitution, with its admirable system of checks and balances, was not likely to take root and flourish in France; nor was he, we may presume, of opinion that a fine growth of humbugs might not find shelter under its branches even in its native land. But he contemplates the French as a spectator from without, who has just a touch of the good old Johnsonian theory that "foreigners are fools." He laughs at the "Idées Napoléoniennes," and sets down the nephew of his uncle as a quack; but is not quite certain that this quackery may not succeed in a land where so many quacks have had their day. The comic eagle was let loose in America; but "who knows how soon it may be on the wing again, and what a flight it will take?" Without professing any special political creed, he notes significant phenomena with the same kind of half-contemptuous curiosity. After giving copious extracts to illustrate the strange mysticism of George Sand's "Spiridion," with a natural regret that she should have deserted

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the province in which she was so admirable, to be a futile prophetess, he observes that she is the representative of a vast class of her countrymen. "The leaves of the Diderot and Rousseau tree have produced this ripe and goodly fruit; here it is ripe, bursting, and ready to fall;—and how to fall! Heaven send that it may drop easily, for all can see that the time is come!"

Thackeray was no politician, though he once condescended to be a candidate for Parliament. We should all agree that it was not the proper place for him; but I think that any attentive reader will see that his disqualification did not rest upon any failure to appreciate, as fully as the ordinary political hack, the full depth and significance of the great issues of the time. For the business of politics he had of course no vocation, nor did his political creed form itself into any definite shape applicable to the specific disputes of the day. But he had a marvellously keen eye for the various manifestations of humbug, and a conviction that humbug is an awkward basis for any lasting institutions would have played a prominent part in any creed which he might have advocated. Doubtless, too, it would have hindered him from adopting any new crotchet or new revelation with the enthusiasm required in an effective propagandist. But he naturally took a much livelier interest in art than in politics. I will not venture to dwell upon his view of French pictures: I have not the necessary knowledge to criticise his criticism. It is enough to notice his warm appreciation of the genuineness of the French love of art, his contempt for the sham historical school, and the "namby-pamby mystical German school," or the "absurd humbug called Christian or Catholic art," and his delight in any sign of simple, fresh, poetical emotion. Evidently the hatred of humbug, and the sympathy with any genuine touch of nature, was as predominant here as elsewhere. It would be more interesting to discuss his criticisms upon those French masters of fiction from whom he learnt something, and whose influence we might have expected to be still more clearly marked. Thackeray, however, was too much of an artist to be a good critic; he had not the analytical turn of mind which enables a man to dissect a book or picture, and

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extract from it the abstract principles which guided the creator. He quotes the passages or tells the stories which strike him; but is content to give the impression without accounting for it by any deliberate reasoning. He feels, of course, the charm of George Sand's style, and he delighted, more perhaps than stern critics would approve, in the boundless vivacity and talent for story-telling of the creator of Athos, Porthos, and Aramis. The author in whom he seems to have been particularly interested at this time was Charles de Bernard, more remarkable, as he says, than any French author, for writing like a gentleman, and showing us "ease, grace, and *ton* in his style, not to be found in Balzac, Soulié, or Dumas." He adapted one of Bernard's stories in the "Bedford Row Conspiracy." Yet his remarks turn chiefly, like those of any commonplace writer, upon the immorality revealed in "Gerfaut" and the "Femme de Quarante Ans," and the evil results of *mariages de convenance*. He does not hold, indeed, to the popular theory of English superiority in all such matters. "Talk of English morality," he says: "the worst licentiousness in the worst period of the French monarchy scarcely equalled the wickedness of this Sabbath-keeping country of ours." But the indecency of French fiction shocked him. He turns with a brief expression of disgust from the "monstrous and terrible exaggerations in which late French writers have indulged," and he apparently refers to Balzac simply as a criminal in this category. Between Balzac and Thackeray himself there is a parallel upon which I must presently say a few words; and the judgments just noted will perhaps throw some light upon the question. Meanwhile I must, however, revert to Thackeray's position in life.

The years which followed his settlement in Paris brought both trials and happiness. He lost his fortune, and he had to turn for a livelihood to literature, finding that the career of a painter was not to bring in the necessary funds for that purpose. He married in 1837, and of course encountered new liabilities. A young man has no cause of complaint when he is forced to earn bread for himself and his family; and, if he has to struggle against some anxieties, no one but an effeminate coward would whine under such blows of fate.

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The discipline which forces him to become laborious, and ultimately to become famous, is invigorating and wholesome, though a man may fairly feel a few twinges before victory has declared itself. But Thackeray had in after years to suffer under trials of a very different and incomparably severer kind. The hopeless illness of his wife, though for a long time the hopelessness was not evident, ruined his domestic happiness. The calamity was in some ways even worse than one inflicted by death. He was doomed to solitude for the rest of his days; his strongest affections could find no home support; his children were still infants: the pathetic reference which concludes so tenderly the humorous poem in "Cornhill to Cairo"—

> "And when, its force expended,
> The harmless storm was ended,
> And as the sunrise splendid
> Came blushing o'er the sea,
> I thought, as day was breaking,
> My little girls were waking,
> And smiling, and making
> A prayer at home for me,"

is doubly pathetic when we think of what was necessarily left unsaid. In after years the little girls might restore cheerfulness and peace to the blighted home; but in the period of which I am now to speak—the period of a large proportion of his strongest work—that could not be. He was forced to work hard, and the necessity was doubtless beneficial; but hard work, without possibility of the sweetest and best reward that a worker can gain, is at best a palliative, if not the only palliative, for trouble, not in itself a thing to make a man cheerful. It must no doubt be pleasant to be a well-known writer in popular periodicals, and still pleasanter to become a recognised leader of literature. But that kind of pleasure remains, so to speak, at arm's length, and does not warm a man to the core of his nature. The teacher who should pronounce literary success to be one of the most striking illustrations of Thackeray's favourite text, Vanity of Vanities, would, I fancy, have a good deal to say for himself. It gives solid advantages, and an introduction to much agreeable society; but I doubt

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whether any man can live on such empty fare as an author's fame, unless his happiness depends in an abnormal degree upon gratified vanity. Thackeray's fame was not fairly won till the publication of "Vanity Fair," and the years which preceded that achievement were haunted by continuous and severe sorrow. It is necessary to say so much in order to form any just estimate of that melancholy tone which runs through many of his writings at this period, and which, without this consideration, might lead to a false estimate of his character. He is fond of alluding to the old anecdote of the player, who has to wear a mask of comedy, whilst inward sorrow is tearing his heart. There is so much analogy to his own case, that anxiety and helpless regret must often have been lying in wait for him whenever he dropped the pen; and we need not look very closely to detect some consciousness of these enemies: even when his humour is most playful, a casual turn may cause a passing twinge, and he winces as he bends to his work.

It is needless to dwell longer upon these reflections. Thackeray's work, like other people's, must ultimately be judged on its own merits and without reference to the personal history of its author. The question remains of his relation to contemporary literature. What were the moods of thought which were seeking to express themselves, and who were the authorised interpreters? What was the niche to be filled by the new aspirant? Thackeray does not appear to have been prepared with a distinct answer to such questions when he first took to literature as a profession. He had in great measure to feel his way, and certainly did not, like some more fortunate writers, burst upon the world as a fully-developed genius. He had passed five-and-thirty before his triumph was unequivocally achieved; and, though some earlier works might give a sufficient indication of his power to intelligent critics, he made various experiments before fully recognising his true sphere. The earlier writings, however, show what he thought of the men who were then at the head of his profession, and so indirectly reveal the nature of his own impulses. The future literary historian of the nineteenth century will have to deal at length with topics which I can only touch in the most cursory manner. He will probably observe that the years

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in which Thackeray was growing to manhood mark a very distinct transition. Generations of mankind overlap; but it often seems as though the generations in literature succeeded each other without blending. A group of eminent men appears simultaneously, and then dies out to give room to its successors. So, for example, the groups which flourished (to use the time-honoured phrase) at the opening of the seventeenth, of the eighteenth, and of the nineteenth centuries respectively may each be marked off from their immediate followers by very definite limits of time. The era of the Reform Bill coincides with the extinction of a whole generation of eminent men. Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Keats, Lamb, Southey, and others, all either passed away or ceased to be productive within a few years of that date. Poor Colonel Newcome was quite bewildered when he returned from India and found the young men of letters provided with a new set of idols. Not to dwell upon other differences, it is remarkable that our grandfathers, the men who were stirred by the great revolutionary earthquake, were far more poetical than their children. We still have one or two great poets amongst us, and a very large number of moderate poets; but no poem which has appeared within the last half-century has taken the world by storm, like the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" or "Childe Harold," or has produced so profound an effect upon thoughtful minds as the poetry of Wordsworth. At a time when such a writer as Crabbe—a man whom I heartily admire, but who certainly is not to be reckoned amongst great names—could receive 3,000*l.* for a new set of tales in verse, it is clear that there must have been a very large and inflammable public. On the other hand, Scott was the only man of very high or enduring reputation who made a great success in the department of fiction. Scott, to my thinking, is one of our very greatest names; but it is curious to remark how solitary was his empire. Miss Austen belongs to quite a different category, and, however admirable her art, was clearly not one of those writers who stamp a character upon the literature of the time. But who were Scott's rivals or imitators? There must have been some, for people read novels then, though perhaps not so exclusively as now. But who were they? If

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Scott stands for Shakspeare, who were the Ben Jonsons, and Fletchers, and Chapmans, and Massingers of the period? I presume that a candidate in a competitive examination could answer, and indeed, after a little thought, I could suggest a name or two myself; but certain it is that they have sunk into oblivion, and that a novel of this period means for us a Waverley Novel. In the later period fiction seems to have succeeded to poetry, and one may perhaps assume that the difference is significant. A period of comparative calm was following a vehement outburst of sentiment. The strong emotion which could only express itself in lyrical outbursts was passing away, and the world was to be content to resume a quiet jogtrot of prose for another generation. People were beginning to see the ridiculous side of Wertherism and Byronism; and nobody, except Mr. G. P. R. James, tried to carry on the style of Scott's romances.

This, of course, is only one aspect of a very complex process; but we see it very clearly represented in Thackeray. Byron, for example, was one of his favourite antipathies. He seldom speaks of him without a manifest dislike. He naturally thinks of him at Athens in connection with the beauty of Greek women, upon which subject, as we know, Byron had uttered various sentiments. "Lord Byron," observes Thackeray, "wrote more cant of this sort than any poet I know of. Think of the 'peasant girls with dark blue eyes' of the Rhine—the brown-faced, flat-nosed, thick-lipped dirty wenches! Think of 'filling high a cup of Samian wine;' small beer is nectar compared to it, and Byron himself always drank gin. That man *never* wrote from his heart. He got up rapture and enthusiasm with an eye to the public: but this is dangerous ground, even more dangerous than to look Athens full in the face and say that your eyes are not dazzled by its beauty. The great public admires Greece and Byron. The public knows best. Murray's 'Guide-book' calls the latter, 'our native bard!' Our native bard! *Mon Dieu! He* Shakspeare's, Milton's, Keats's, Scott's native bard! Well, woe be to the man who denies the public gods!" Warrington expresses a similar opinion to Colonel Newcome, though with less energy, for, in truth, less energy was required

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to meet the flagging tide of Byronic enthusiasm. His view of Scott is hinted a little further on in the same book. "When," he asks, "shall we have a real account of those times and heroes—no good-humoured pageant like those of the Scott romances—but a real authentic story to instruct and frighten honest people of the present day and make them thankful that the grocer governs the world now in the place of the baron?" In fact, if we think of it, the grocer came in for his turn with Louis Philippe and the English Reform Bill; and the sham glorification of feudalism (the "brutal, unchristian blundering feudal system," says Thackeray), which we now see to be the alloy which mixes with Scott's pure gold, and not, as his early readers imagined, the really valuable element, was growing threadbare like other affectations. The grocer, too, has his faults and may as well hear of them; but they are best portrayed in plain prose and with unflinching realism.

Two contemporaries of Thackeray's were rapidly growing famous; they were for him the representatives of the rival literary schools which were to supplant Scott and Byron. His view of their performance is therefore interesting as indicative of his own position. Bulwer, afterwards Lord Lytton, was six years his senior, and had become conspicuous whilst Thackeray was still at college. This is not the place to attempt any estimate of Bulwer's merits. It is at least clear that he was a man of extraordinary versatility and energy, and with talents so great that they may easily be taken for genius. His early novels are perhaps less familiar to readers of the present day than the later books, "The Caxtons" and its successors, which differ rather curiously from his first performances. Amongst other changes, he became rather obtrusively moral, and given to sing the praises of domestic propriety. It would therefore be difficult for anyone, familiar with these stories alone, to appreciate the satire which Thackeray directed against him in the "Novels by Eminent Hands" and the Deuceace papers. I have reason to know that Thackeray materially changed his views upon this matter, and expressed some regret for the asperity of his early utterance. In youth we are all apt to be intolerant and dogmatic. But in those early days he evidently regarded Bulwer to a great extent as another avatar of the

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great spirit of humbug. For not only did the new writer talk about the True and the Beautiful in capital letters, or, in other words, try to enliven British dulness by a liberal infusion of German mysticism and sentimentalism, but he applied this sham philosophy to point very immoral doctrines in such books as "Ernest Maltravers" and "Eugene Aram." He gave himself the airs at once of a dandy and a metaphysician, and tried to astonish British grocers and other respectabilities by an affectation as silly as it was offensive. If the public was tired of Byron's rant and Scott's romance, these new-fangled antics of a clever prig, who was trying to gain notoriety by insulting honest prejudice, and mystifying plain understanding, were at bottom an offensive continuation of fooleries which ought to be dead and buried. That, at least, is the light in which I take Bulwer to have appeared to Thackeray in early days. Certain it is that, though Thackeray admits his rival to be a man of remarkable talents, he pours unsparing ridicule upon his pretensions, and regards his philosophising and his poetising with equal contempt. Dickens, one year junior to Thackeray, certainly did not offend in this way. He had no desire whatever to mystify or to shock. He was successful beyond any English novelist, probably beyond any novelist that has ever lived, in exactly hitting off the precise tone of thought and feeling which would find favour with the grocers. As Burke said of George Grenville and the House of Commons, Dickens hit the average Englishmen of the middle classes between wind and water. Nor would Thackeray have been slow to declare, if any criticism of a writer generally considered to be in some sense his rival had been becoming, that Dickens won his amazing triumph not merely by an extraordinary and, in its way, quite unrivalled faculty for perceiving certain aspects of men and things, but also by appealing to the better nature of his hearer. The only question that can be raised in regard to Dickens concerns the intellectual depth of his perceptions. He may be accused of taking up too easily the obvious commonplace view of things, which commends itself to the class which he delighted because it makes little demand upon their power of thought. Some such view is perhaps indicated in Thackeray's reference

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to him in the "Paris Sketch Book"—a reference made before both men had become too famous and too much connected to speak freely of each other. The future student of history would do wrong, he says, "to put that great contemporary history of Pickwick aside as a frivolous work. It contains true character under false names, and, like 'Roderick Random,' an inferior work, and 'Tom Jones' (one that is immeasurably superior), gives us a better idea of the state and ways of the people than one could gather from more pompous or authentic histories." The scale of merit is interesting, though, of course, it can only be taken as representing Thackeray's impression at an early period of his own and Dickens's career.

Thackeray's admiration of Fielding is in many ways significant. He has often been compared to Fielding, and, in my opinion, the resemblance is close and important. That excellent critic, the late Mr. Bagehot, has indeed spoken of the annoyance with which readers who really appreciate Thackeray hear the comparison made, and has traced to his own satisfaction a closer parallel between Thackeray and Sterne. I am sorry to come under this anticipatory condemnation, and to submit to the implication that I do not rightly appreciate Thackeray. Yet I must take my chance, and can only say that, in this case, Mr. Bagehot seems to me to have been misled by a certain preference for paradoxical views. Whether Thackeray most resembled Fielding or Sterne, there can be no doubt which he loved. To Sterne he found it hard even to render the praise which he saw to be just, so heartily did he abhor the pruriency, the affectation, and the sham sentimentalism of that strange compound of genius and baseness. But Fielding was not only a favourite, but in some degree a model. "Since the author of 'Tom Jones' was buried," he says, "no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a Man." And I could not better describe what was, in my opinion, Thackeray's conception of his proper function as an author than by saying that it was his ambition to tread in the steps of Fielding, though with more refinement and greater tenderness of sentiment. He had, as all that I have been saying tends to prove, an eye for a humbug; a hearty scorn for sham sentiment in literature, for sham

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loyalty in politics, for sham proprieties and sham improprieties in social life. Mr. Carlyle himself could not entertain that creed more severely or preach more vigorously from the Johnsonian text, "Clear your mind of cant." This is indeed almost the only point of contact. Thackeray and Carlyle differed as the prophet of a generation differs from the artist in whose mind the dislike to cant takes the form, not of a tendency to indignant rhetoric, but of a preference of realism touched by humour to all strained sentiment. It is from this point of view that Thackeray regarded the Scott romanticism as effete, detested the dying affectation of Byronism, and looked upon Bulwerism as merely a new phase of affectation, imported from Germany by a conceited dandy. The Dickens view, as represented in "Pickwick," would probably appear to him to sin by superficiality. It was infinitely amusing, more amusing than Smollett's best work, but did not imply that unflinching resolution to set forth actual facts of life which he so heartily appreciated in Fielding. Fielding was allowed a liberty of expression, which he abused only too often so as to degenerate into the coarse, and even the purely disgusting. But at least Fielding looked at the world calmly, resolutely, and with a penetrating gaze, which refused to be hoodwinked by fine phrases. He described men as he saw them, unveiled hypocrites, and gave to the passions their real value and meaning. He saw the man, not the clothes. In that sense, Thackeray could follow him, so far as British decency would allow. He would not deal in Scott's cavaliers in buff jerkins, nor in Byron's scowling corsairs in Eastern petticoats, nor in Tom Moore's Peris and bulbuls, nor in Bulwer's philosophic and dandified seducers and high-minded assassins, nor in Dickens's grotesque figures, overflowing with milk-punch and maudlin philanthropy. He would draw to the life the world as he saw it, stripped of its pleasant disguises and solemn humbugs, as far as his powers could go; and try whether a downright realistic portraiture would not have a chance of success in the literary world then encumbered by the fashionable novel, and the highwayman novel, and the famous traveller novel, as well as occupied by work of higher pretensions.

It is only by degrees, as I have said, that Thackeray came

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to put forth his power, on an adequate scale, whether self-distrust, or indolence, or other distractions, restrained him to less daring procedure. His first story of any serious pretensions shows, I think, that he was still taking a comparatively narrow view of the nature of the evil to be assaulted. "Catherine" is intended, as the author tells us very frankly, as an attack upon some of the rising idols of the day. Bulwer, Harrison Ainsworth, and Dickens are the objects of his rather naïf indignation. "The public will hear of nothing but rogues," he says, "and the only way in which poor authors, who must live, can act honestly by the public and themselves, is to paint such thieves as they are; not dandy poetical rose-water thieves; but real downright scoundrels, leading scoundrelly lives, drunken, profligate, dissolute, low, as scoundrels will be. They don't quote Plato, like Eugene Aram, and live like gentlemen, and sing the pleasantest ballads in the world, like Dick Turpin; or prate eternally about τὸ καλὸν like that precious canting Maltravers, whom we all of us have read about and pitied; or die whitewashed saints like 'Biss Dadsy' in 'Oliver Twist;'" and some good honest indignation follows as to the error of weeping over the criminal population. Certainly, the devil ought to be painted black, and with his full complement of horns and hoofs; only we are a little surprised to see Dickens charged with this fault, for it cannot be denied that "Oliver Twist" is in intention as moral as a tract; and we feel still more that the offence is scarcely worth the powder and shot. The immorality which tries to make highwaymen and murderers interesting is easily exposed, and not very seductive; it is by a much more subtle intermixture of good and evil that poisonous literature is commended to the palate. We might also doubt whether in any case the mode of demonstrating the ugliness of villany is not a little too elaborate. The author confesses to weariness of his own creatures, and we are inclined to sympathise. "Catherine," however, is interesting, not only as an early specimen of the master's hand, and showing many of the qualities of style and types of character which were afterwards more fully developed, but as manifesting, even in a comparatively crude form, his strong conviction of the value of downright realistic

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honesty of portraiture. I venture to guess that besides his desire to expose a contemporary evil, Thackeray was more or less prompted by a wish to try his hand at an imitation of Fielding's "great comic epic,"—as he calls it in the "Paris Sketch Book"—the "History of Jonathan Wild the Great." That powerful satire is perhaps the closest literary parallel to "Catherine;" and the coarse vigour of its execution had excited Thackeray's hearty admiration. Fielding is indeed able to be still more realistic in his discussion of the unmitigated brutality of a thorough-paced ingrained villain; and the immediate purpose of his satire is rather different from that of "Catherine." The moral of "Jonathan Wild" appears to be the doctrine popular with the philanthropic philosophers of Fielding's time, that the difference between a conqueror and a murderer is simply the difference between a wholesale and a retail occupation. Thackeray himself was presently, as we shall see, to preach more or less from that text. Meanwhile "Catherine," whatever the merits of the story, was necessarily liable to the objection that the more vigorous the performance, the more disagreeable it must be to average readers. It could only be attractive whilst the tendency which it caricatured was sufficiently obvious to make a caricature intelligible; and English novelists did not long continue to sing the praises of the heroes of Newgate. Its chief interest is now for the critic who wishes to examine the development of its author's powers.

This curious study of the blackguard element may possibly have helped to interest Thackeray in a problem to which novelists pay less attention than it deserves. A virtuous person—by a virtuous man I mean anyone possessed of a conscience not habitually outraged—is often puzzled to interpret to himself the state of mind of the systematic scamp. A certain degree of self-complacency seems to be almost a necessity of life. A man who is always condemning his own actions, and whose existence depends upon conduct which he regards as shameful, seems to be barely intelligible. Everybody commits at times actions which he regrets, and tries perhaps to atone for them by repentance. But how can a man live in a continuous atmosphere of self-disgust—loathing the very bread which supports his life—feeling more humiliated

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in proportion to the success of his schemes? A thorough villain and even a thorough hypocrite is intelligible; so far as we can suppose a man to have simply no conscience; to disbelieve in the possession of a conscience by anyone; and to put on a merely external mask of moral or religious sentiment, as a pickpocket puts on a decent coat. Most novelists are satisfied with such a type of character, and are content to draw a man simply and radically bad—a devil incarnate, entirely composed of mean, cruel, or sensual instincts. Such people exist, I fancy, and perhaps are more common than is sometimes said. But they scarcely represent the normal case, and certainly not the most puzzling case. When a respectable banker or clergyman turns out to have been living upon downright cheating for years, we do not suppose that he was entirely without a conscience, but that it was smothered and hoodwinked. How did he manage it? How did he soothe the pain of constant remorse? How did he comfort himself under the constantly recurring reflection, I am a liar and a villain? And so of the average rogue; the man who knows that every gentleman scorns him, and every honest man sees through him, and who yet lives "infamous and contented;" how does he manage to put such a colour upon his conduct in his own private reflections as to make life tolerable?

To consider the question fairly requires a certain impartiality which most novelists lose. They hate their villains so as to make them—not perhaps unnatural, but abnormally base. They tear away every shred of excuse which might blind not only the spectator, but the criminal himself. Thackeray, however, seldom loses his temper with his characters, and he had evidently looked at this problem with his usual calmness. In several of his pictures we have the curious study of a villain seen from within. Mr. Brough in the "Hoggarty Diamond," and Mr. Brandon in "Philip," are sketches of one variety of impostor, and we can see in each case how they have imposed upon themselves. But a more extreme case is taken in one or two of the earlier stories. The "Fatal Boots," for example, is a study of the thorough sneak, the utterly mean and contemptible knave, whose miserable cunning and selfishness has overreached itself, and who is quite unable to

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understand why Mr. Titmarsh should find any moral in his story. To him it appears to be a melancholy proof that in this world the most scrupulous devotion to the best object—one's own interest—may often fail, from some unaccountable perversity in the nature of things, to meet with its due reward. A villain of a more heroic type is depicted with more intensity in the story of "Barry Lyndon." I will take, says Thackeray, in effect, a man who lives by roguery: he shall be a braggart, a liar, a thoroughly selfish and unprincipled scoundrel; he shall be a spy and a pander, ready to consent to the meanest services in order to attain the means of sensual gratification; he shall live, during the most respectable part of his career, as a professional gambler, cheating whenever he thinks that cheating will not be detected; he shall be prepared to take advantage of any secret scandals which may come to his knowledge, in order to extort money from the unfortunate victims, or compel them to further his scheme of forcing a rich heiress into marriage; when that fails, he shall by sheer bullying and blustering, and enormous lying, become the husband of a widow with a fortune, whom he heartily despises for her weakness; when married, he shall treat her with brutality, be openly unfaithful to her, bully her son, squander her fortune, and make himself the laughing-stock of good society, in spite of his vulgar swagger, and console himself by buying the attention of the lowest parasites; at last, after alienating the affections of everyone concerned in him, except his old mother, who sticks by him to the last, he shall fall into the lowest decay, be deservedly thrashed by his stepson, and die in the Fleet of *delirium tremens*. A few good impulses may be allowed to him: he shall be fond of his boy, and have a certain courage and buoyancy which would conciliate us in a better cause. So much is necessary in order that he may be possessed of some feelings capable of doing duty for a conscience; and, in spite of all the unutterable baseness of the man, you shall see how he not only reconciles himself to his position, but is sincerely proud of it; how he has a genuine conviction that he is really a most meritorious and estimable person; and can, on occasion, preach edifying sermons, regret the decay of the fine old spirit of the ancient noblesse, and consider

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himself as an eminent member of the aristocracy of nature, as well as a worthy descendant of the ancient kings of Ireland.

This is clearly a far more effective exposure of villany than the method adopted in "Catherine." Nobody can read "Barry Lyndon" without the heartiest disgust for the hero, and a perception that even the rags and tatters of virtuous spirit in which he delights to array himself are probably manufactured in part out of downright lying; and yet we can also see how at every turn in his history Mr. Lyndon has an unfeigned admiration for his own fine qualities, and can speak with pathetic indignation of the ingratitude which he has received from the world. The story has never been so popular as others—not so popular, I imagine, as the "Hoggarty Diamond," which is a more straightforward and normal fiction; and for the simple reason that no art can make such a narrative agreeable to the ordinary reader. It is of the nature of a *tour de force*; but, taken on that understanding, it is certainly amongst the most remarkable efforts of its author's imagination. Undoubtedly his intellectual power had reached its full development when "Barry Lyndon" was written—and read, as it seems, with little attention. He never made a villain (I must not ask whether anyone else ever made a villain) more supremely hateful and yet more thoroughly intelligible. It is not merely as giving the skilful anatomy of a corrupt heart that the story deserves the study of Thackeray's admirers. The style shows a quality which changes—as his mental attitude changes—in his later productions. In them he is fond of turning aside from his characters and his story to address his readers or indulge in a kind of public soliloquy. He makes his own reflections, and the reflections are often amongst the most interesting passages of the story. But in "Barry Lyndon" he is more occupied with the direct presentation of telling facts. The style is intense, vivid, and compressed; especially in the description of his hero's military adventures and the striking story of the tragedy in the Duchy of X——. I have remarked that Thackeray, though sharing Mr. Carlyle's antipathy to humbug, gives a very different version of the creed. Those early chapters of "Barry Lyndon" give a very compressed view

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of the reverse side of history, which, short as it is and fictitious in its form, would be a very effective antidote to some eulogies upon the great King of the eighteenth century. Mr. Barry Lyndon is a knave of the purest water; but he has human feelings when his interests are not concerned on the other side. "Whilst we are at present admiring the 'Great Frederick,'" he says, "his philosophy and his liberality and his military genius, I, who have served him and been, as it were, behind the scenes of which that great spectacle is composed, can only look at it with horror. What a number of items of human crime, misery, slavery, go to form that sum-total of glory! I can recollect a certain day, about three weeks after the battle of Minden, and a farmhouse in which some of us entered, and how the old woman and her daughters served us trembling to wine; and how we got drunk over the wine, and the house was in a flame presently; and woe betide the wretched fellow afterwards who came home to look for his wife and his children!"

Thackeray was not a hero-worshipper, as we shall have occasion to observe; and in "Barry Lyndon" he preaches very energetically that doctrine about the great men of history which his favourite Fielding had expressed in "Jonathan Wild." His other stories of the same period deviate less from the ordinary track, and may be considered as preparatory studies for the more important works which followed. They seem to have attracted less attention than the papers which he was then contributing to *Punch*, which first made his reputation general. Yet I must refer to one proof that his genius was meeting with recognition from readers of penetration. "I got hold of the first two numbers of the 'Hoggarty Diamond,'" says John Sterling, writing to his mother in December 1841, "and read them with extreme delight. What is there better in Goldsmith or Fielding? The man is a true genius, and, with quiet and comfort, might produce masterpieces that would last as long as any we have and delight millions of unborn readers. There is more truth and nature in one of these papers than in all ——'s novels together." "Thackeray," remarks Mr. Carlyle, "will observe that this is dated 1841, not 1851, and have his own reflections on the matter!" The fresh hearty nature of the "Hoggarty

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Diamond" was, however, unable to arrest public attention as the sterner force of "Barry Lyndon" was likely to repel it; but in the "Snob" papers Thackeray for the first time achieved a distinct popular success with readers of perceptions less keen than Sterling's. The moral essay or lay sermon has been popular under a great variety of forms in English literature. The "Snob" papers contain as many lively sketches of character as are to be found in any collection of the kind; and we see that Thackeray is an essayist by accident, and would prefer concrete pictures of life to abstract discussions. Perhaps he has nowhere drawn a more lively character by a few touches than Major Ponto, and some other brilliant vignettes show almost equally his skill in graphic portraiture. But the speciality of the little book (which first appeared as a separate collection in 1848, when he was becoming known as the author of "Vanity Fair") is the central social doctrine which it is intended to enforce. I am not prepared to give a philological discussion upon the origin of the word snob, which, as we have already seen, he had used as an undergraduate. Anyhow in Thackeray's hands it now received a new connotation. "Snob," as he says, meant, in the Cambridge days, a youth who wore "highlows and no straps"—symptoms of an inferior social grade, which have now become obsolete;—whereas the true snob was the youth who despised his strapless comrade. I resist the temptation to dwell upon this illustration of one process by which words change their meanings. The meaning, in any case, was virtually new; and there is some truth in Thackeray's humorous description of himself in the first chapter as the being predestined to describe the snob, and therefore provided with an eye for the species. Great physicians have been immortalised by giving their name to some new or previously unclassified malady, and we may venture to say that the morbid condition of society known as snobbishness might as well be called Thackeray's disease. The servile love of rank has indeed been pretty well known in all ages, but that special form of servility which is manifested in England by the association of the "Peerage" with the Bible had never been contemplated as a distinct variety or ticketed by a class name.

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Opinions may of course differ as to the prevalence and importance of this disease. To some people it may seem that the worship of lords is neither so widely spread in English society as Thackeray supposed, nor so serious a symptom; and they may think that, as usually happens, the zeal of the early discoverer led him to exaggerate the importance of his discovery. My own view would be that snobbishness in Thackeray's sense is a special manifestation of an evil tendency much more easily underrated than exaggerated. He satirised the special symptoms which came most frequently in his way, or described one variety of a widely spread genus. If he incidentally lost sight of the underlying conditions which generate snobbishness, his conception was so far superficial. He erred in an artistic sense, as a man would err logically who attacked a particular corollary from an erroneous doctrine without striking at the radical fallacy. On the other hand, a novelist must of necessity proceed by giving typical and concrete instances, and not by abstract discussion of principles. Thackeray, limiting himself to the society with which he was most familiar, laid most emphasis upon the form of the evil which came most frequently under his notice. The question for a critic would be whether he so treated it as to show insight into deeper springs of conduct. Does he denounce snobbishness as a mere superficial fashion, an absurd eccentricity amenable to gentle treatment, or does he show how it arises out of profound defect of character and an unwholesome stage of social development? An intellectual treatment gives the true genesis of the evil where a superficial treatment gives only the accidental absurdity and inconvenience.

That, I take it, is the criterion by which Thackeray's works should be tested: though I shall not attempt to apply the test myself. This much, however, I will venture to say. Thackeray gives in his second chapter his own definition of snobbishness: "He who meanly admires mean things is a snob." * He illustrates the proposition in the same essay by one of his favourite

* It may be compared with Mr. Ruskin's definition of poetry; which is, he thinks, the suggestion by the imagination of noble grounds for the noble emotions—and, if so, it would seem the poetic is the antithesis of the snobbish and vulgar. I think both definitions excellent, though a little wide.

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examples, the "fat old Florizel," the "bloated pimplefaced Gorgius," or, in plain English, George IV. The theory of snobbishness is pretty well exemplified by the worship paid to that broken idol. Loyalty is a noble emotion as long as it is genuine; as long, that is, as it implies a generous spirit of self-devotion to the constituted representative of the great principles of order and national unity. Nothing could be more generous and deserving of all respect than the loyalty of an old English cavalier, who would die without a thought of self in the cause of his king; or the loyalty of a modern American republican who died with an equally generous devotion in the cause of the constitution. Loyalty turns into snobbishness when it is selfishness or meanness disguised; when we reverence the king or the mob as the distributor of places or pensions, or when our souls are overpowered by the gorgeous outside without being touched by any generous emotion. If the idol which you venerate is a mere sham, made up of wigs and robes and plush, or of mere buncombe about the rights of man, your veneration is the product of your lower nature, and is so far grovelling and degrading. The vice of snobbishness, then, is the outcome of a state of society in which the dead form has survived the living spirit, and men go on their knees before wealth and rank without considering them as symbols of some loftier principles. It is not wrong to be respectful to a king or a noble, if the custom of the time requires respect, and to refuse the conventional homage would imply nothing better than a peevish petulance. But it is contemptible to proportion your respect simply to the outside magnificence or the bigness of the phrases without a thought of the ultimate basis upon which all respect must repose which is not dishonourable to both giver and receiver.

That, I fancy, roughly stated, would be the true theory of snobbishness; and would account for the prevalence and significance of the fashion in a time and country where there are so many decaying survivals of old superstitions that have lost their genuine vitality. Why is poor Major Ponto so pathetic an instance of misplaced veneration? Because he has no purpose in life worth the sympathy of an intellectual being; because he is dropping the substance for the form; because

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he is striving to keep up a social status as an ultimate end, without its ever crossing his mind that social status is really useful only as a means; because (one may perhaps say) his life is regulated throughout, down to its smallest details, by the same mysterious principle which decides that his daughters are to be incessantly strumming on the piano. They have no love of music or power of enjoying it, but it is part of their whole theory of life that they are to acquire certain accomplishments as a badge of social respectability. Music is admirable for musicians, but the queer superstition which sacrifices the lives of so many girls to a task which is for them as lively as a performance upon the treadmill is beginning, one may hope, to reveal its absurdity. It is merely a particular case, however, of that senseless process by which so many inhabitants of Thackeray's Mangelwurzelshire, and Baker Street, are drilled in a ceaseless round of mechanical repetition of performances which have ceased to have any intelligible meaning whatever. This particular case of the general fetish worship may imply nothing more than a waste of time; other observances are worse than ridiculous; but there are many modes of paying court to the great Mumbo Jumbo, and innumerable human lives are made barren and wretched by the superstition. The family of the De Mogynses, whose whole aim is to fight their way into drawing-rooms; Lieutenant Grig, who passes his life as a magnificent flunkey in a cuirass and top-boots, and in marches from Knightsbridge to Regent's Park; Mrs. Botibol, who crams hundreds of perspiring wretches into three little rooms to enjoy a literary conversazione, and stare at Abou Gosh from Syria; and poor Ponto, trying desperately to pay young Ponto's bills for his pelisses and overalls required in the Queen's old piebald hussars; these and any number of other British types, are equally illustrative of the narrow mechanical millround in which so many lives are passed. The struggle for social position, the mean subservience to those who can bestow it, is one outgrowth of the system, and one upon which Thackeray has laid particular stress. But the common characteristic of all such lives is that the true end of human existence, the gratification of the domestic affections, of intellectual or artistic impulses, of any of the deepest instincts of

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our nature, is neglected and despised in the senseless competition for things whose only intrinsic worth would be in their applicability to loftier purposes. It is an old story—as old as human nature—as old, certainly, as the day when the weary philosopher uttered his "Vanity of vanities." But the idol to which men sacrifice their lives and the mode of worship which is regarded as likely to propitiate him vary from age to age, and in Thackeray's day and station the most popular cult seemed to him to be mainly describable as "snobbishness." It is the form characteristic of a social atmosphere in which shams flourish, in which no man can say precisely what he believes, or what he respects, or what are the ultimate grounds for respecting or believing in anything. When life goes out of a religion it becomes an organised hypocrisy, and when institutions have nothing better to say for themselves than that they still occupy the ground, the respect for them becomes snobbishness. The times are ripe for satire, and the satirist will be denounced as a cynic. What is to be thought of a man who does not see the intrinsic beauty which a livery possesses even when it signifies no reciprocation of respect and confidence?

To hint at such a theory of the natural history of snobbishness is to go a little beyond my sphere. Thackeray saw that certain symptoms were ugly. He did not, so far as I know, give any scientific diagnosis of the complaint which caused them, and it is probable enough that he would not have sanctioned mine. At any rate, the ordinary public was impressed chiefly by the phrase snobbishness, and was content to admire or be amused at his skill in portraying various phases of the passion. Probably they thought him, as perhaps he may have been, rather too sensitive on this matter. So long as dukes exist, it is said, easy-going people will be flattered by walking arm-in-arm with them; and if the existence of dukes is a first principle in philosophy, there is of course no more to be said. The probability of that hypothesis lay beyond Thackeray's subject. An essayist is bound to be light in the treatment of his topics, however serious may be the questions which he incidentally raises. But Thackeray, who must have been growing in consciousness of his power,

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was about to give a more serious picture of society from a higher point of view. Of "Vanity Fair," which began to appear in January 1847, I may at least say this much, that no novel has ever been better christened. The title is what a title ought to be—a brief summary of the whole book. And here I may speak briefly of a parallel already suggested. Balzac gave to a series of novels the analogous name of the "Comédie Humaine." He professed to be drawing a faithful portrait of the French as Thackeray of the English society of the day. Balzac is, I think, one of the very greatest masters of his art; and there is at least one case in which Thackeray is said to have taken him to some extent as a model. In speaking, however, of a parallel, I do not mean to compare the merits of the two writers, or to imply any similarity except that of general aim. Parallel drawing is generally a childish amusement: I venture to make the comparison here because the contrast between the two men appears to me to show better than anything the true nature of Thackeray's artistic aims. His taste was shocked, as I remarked, by the extravagant horrors of some French writers, by their delight in painting the darkest passions and selecting situations in which those passions might be represented as triumphant. Balzac is the great master in this school of art. The vividness of his painting is unrivalled; he seems to be rather suffering from hallucination than imagining in the ordinary sense; his creatures dominate his fancy instead of being in subjection to his will. He combines the minute photographic reality of Defoe with the intensity of Dante's vision. He produces absolute illusion, and is therefore supposed by some readers to represent the truth. Nothing but a real perception, it is thought, could generate such vivid images. If we admitted this, we must also admit that French society was more corrupt than any state of society that ever existed. The most cold-blooded selfishness, the most grovelling sensuality, the most contemptible greed and venality would be the normal springs of action, and virtue would be invariably dragged in triumph at the wheels of vice. The truth is, I fancy, much simpler. It is simply that Balzac was anxious to produce the most poignant sensation, whether painful or

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agreeable; and made the great discovery that an inversion of the old-fashioned canons of poetical justice was as piquant to the ordinary reader as their observance. Nothing is more pathetic than a story of goodness bound hand and foot by victorious evil; and though Balzac aimed constantly at this effect, and often produces it with astonishing power, unconditional admirers assume too easily that it implied extraordinary penetration, and, using the worn-out metaphor of the scalpel, describe him as dissecting with unequalled skill that hideous organ, a "naked human heart." The assertion that all successful men are rogues and all successful women harlots is made very easily, and, if true, certainly entitles a man to be called a most penetrative observer; but if the case is simply that he calls the world corrupt because he has found out that a description of corruption is more impressive than a description of the natural state of things, in which honesty is the best policy and rogues have a tendency to the gallows, we must so far withdraw our approval. He has undoubtedly marvellous power, but it shows skill in morbid pathology rather than in observing the organism in its normal condition.

A good deal has been said about Thackeray's use of this same "scalpel," his merciless dissection of the selfishness and meanness of human nature, and so on. At any rate, his aim differs radically from that of Balzac; and he diverges just at this point. Thackeray's ultimate aim always appears to have been not the production of a vivid sensation, but the faithful portraiture of actual society. He will not represent virtue as always triumphant, for virtue does not always triumph; still less will he make vice the invariable conqueror, for vice generally fails to succeed in the long run. He does not see many great heroes or many great criminals in actual life; and therefore there shall not be many in his books. Fine phrases cover a vast amount of selfishness, narrowness, and stupidity; and the true nature of the qualities so veiled by cant and hypocrisy should be exposed; but neither is it true that to pierce below the surface of society is to come upon unmixed cruelty and vice; and therefore he will not deal in thrilling revelations, however delicious may be the horrors which they profess to expose. No; life is on the whole a commonplace

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affair, with a queer and intricate blending of motives; kindly feeling is often to be found in the bad, and a dash of selfishness in the good; we will have the normal and not the exceptional cases, even at the price of making our stories, like our lives, rather commonplace. There is interest enough in the facts if we will only open our eyes boldly and see them honestly, without trying to distort them so as to gratify a morbid love of the horrible, or to avoid an occasional shock to the sentimentalist. The faithful picture may be less exciting than that which represents exceptional events as natural; but, at any rate, Thackeray despises any claims inconsistent with a rigid adherence to fidelity of portraiture. How far his portrait is correct is another question; but fidelity, not the production of a powerful effort, is the ultimate end, and a desire to see things as they are the governing and regulating principle of his work.

I may briefly notice one striking story in which Thackeray seems to have taken a hint from Balzac's method. The "Yellowplush Papers," which appeared in *Fraser*, were apparently amongst his first experiments in literature. They show, however, that he was already a master of that "peculiar, unspellable, inimitable, flunkeyfied pronunciation which," as he observes in the Snob papers, "forms one of the chief charms of existence." But beginning with mere comedy or farce, he rapidly slid into one of the bitterest tragedies which he ever composed. The concluding page of the history of Mr. Deuceace is more in the taste of Balzac than anything which afterwards followed. We leave off with a picture of a villain crushed, but crushed by the more cold-blooded and malicious villany of his father, and crushing the one tender heart which clings to him faithfully in spite of everything. Certainly, a strong impression is produced, and one with a curious complexity of horrors. A ghastly sort of comic effect arises from the story being put into the mouth of the absurd Yellowplush, who was calmly looking on with an eye to possible effects upon his own perquisites. The effect is as though a painter should introduce a grotesque gargoyle looking down upon a scene of assassination. Thackeray never, I think, resorted afterwards to this means of moving his readers, though "Dennis

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Haggarty's Wife" is a short study in the same vein. He would, I fancy, have despised it as unworthy. Anybody, he probably thought, can be more or less effective who is not afraid of being disgusting. But, whatever his theory, he confined himself to more normal manifestations of human passion without seeking such effects as are certainly most attractive to readers with an itch for the horrible.

And here, before applying these remarks to "Vanity Fair" and its successors, I may venture to notice one other respect in which Thackeray's feelings about himself and his work seem to have differed characteristically from those of Balzac. Balzac took himself as seriously as a man could; he laboured with astonishing energy; he felt that he had a mission—whether of the ethical or artistic kind; that he was erecting a monument for all time, and that his utterances were matters of vital importance to the world as well as to himself. Undoubtedly this feeling, though it may imply an over-estimate of his own merits, was a great source of power. There is nothing like thorough self-confidence, even if it be rather in excess, to bring out all a man's power. If I fancy that the whole world is concerned in the blacking of my boots, I shall have them better blacked, though the fancy may lead to some inconvenient consequences. Now, Thackeray, it is plain, agreed much more closely with Scott than with Balzac in this matter. He did not take a very lofty view of his own importance to mankind, or perhaps of the importance of his art. Like every man of sensitive nature, he was no doubt easily hurt by adverse criticism, and, indeed, more tender in this respect than the ordinary man of pachydermatous common sense would admit to be wise. But it is quite a mistake to infer self-complacency from sensibility. A man who in all sincerity thinks very humbly of his own position, is often as easily stung by hostile remarks as the man of the most absorbing desire for praise. Thackeray was not, I fancy, morbidly diffident or unconscious of his own powers. But his view of "Vanity Fair" certainly implied that the office of amusing its inhabitants by telling stories was not so dignified as to justify any lofty claims in the story-teller. He put forward no pretension to occupy a pulpit or demand the reverence of his hearers. I am one of you, he seems to say;

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I don't profess to be much better or much worse than my neighbours; I will try to amuse a spare hour by telling you frankly just what impression you make upon me; as a spectator, I can see some things more plainly than those who are absorbed in the struggles or the amusements of the place; if you care to listen, well and good; you will hear what a candid observer thinks of you, and what reflections, melancholy or cheerful, have come into his mind as he rambled past your booths and watched your passions and your sorrows; but if you don't care to listen, it will make little difference. Take my remarks in good part, or leave them alone. I have no gospel to preach—no startling revelations to proclaim, no thrilling message to deliver to my fellow mortals. I shall not try to force myself upon you by any extravagance, or to raise my voice above its natural tone. He is rather fond of telling us that he does not expect us to take his stories too seriously; there is no affectation of preserving a secret till the last number is published; you are quite welcome, if you please, to walk behind the scenes of the little puppet-show, and see how the strings are pulled; and if, after all, you do not feel that the performance is anything very wonderful, perhaps the performer does not think so himself, though he would rather have the information conveyed to him in courteous tones, or implied by silence. The irony of the author does not spare himself, and he is so conscious of the absurdity of putting forward extravagant pretensions, that perhaps he fails a little in the other direction, and breaks the illusion too ruthlessly. Many readers would prefer that the writer should treat his function with more respect; the indifference to his own claims seems to imply indifference to the dignity of his hearers; a preacher may of course call himself and his congregation miserable sinners, but it is dangerous to belittle the importance of an address from one sinner to his fellows; and perhaps in some of Thackeray's writings there are symptoms that this diffidence or self-regarding irony might encourage a certain carelessness in the performance of his task. But, at any rate, the sentiment is characteristic, and implies a scornful rejection of some of the artifices by which most writers of fiction seek to commend themselves to their readers.

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In "Vanity Fair," however, there is no trace of any want of interest in his work. The book everywhere indicates an intensity of feeling, not the less obvious to an attentive reader because rigorously kept below the surface. It is a representation of life which—whatever else we may think of it—is clearly drawn from the heart, and from a heart full of many melancholy reflections. *Vanitas vanitatum!* is the sentiment which is constantly colouring its pages, to a degree not quite pleasant to those who are fond of rose-colour. There are, however, many versions of a doctrine which is, in some shape, forced upon everyone after some little experience. That hope often deceives us, that the head which wears a crown is often uneasy, that merit is often doomed to neglect, and that love and sympathy often mean a capacity for bearing more than our share of sorrow, are commonplaces which we learn by rote in our youth, and which come upon us a little later with the freshness of a new revelation. But the varieties of melancholy are innumerable. Disappointment and sickness of heart may embitter us or make us more tolerant; they may engender pessimism and Wertherism, a cynical resolution to enjoy ourselves; or the ardent philanthropy which so earnestly desires to promote human happiness that it comes to believe in it; or the stoical resolution to take good and evil as manfully as may be, despise whining and cant, and to raise our souls to contemplations beyond the power of chance and change. All is vanity! but yet not quite all. The restless striving and struggling of the world is a tragic farce to the calm observer; but there is consolation to be found somewhere, or the world would be a hell. It is only the young who can afford to be thoroughly misanthropical, and who would require no relief to the blackness of the picture, because at bottom they do not take such sentiments seriously. Even in fiction, the older we grow, the more we like a happy ending to our stories, for we feel more strongly that it is a superfluous undertaking to add to the gloom of the world. "Vanity Fair" was the work of a man still young, though of much bitter experience of life. Perhaps, for that reason, there is less indication in it than in the later books of a desire to look at the pleasant side of things. But it does not, if I understand it rightly, bear the

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impression of unmixed melancholy; but rather of the conviction that whilst many objects of human ambition are mere Dead Sea apples, the brave and pure-hearted may find enough encouragement to make life bearable. The exposure of shams is perhaps more prominent than the solace which is offered; but both elements are present, and to ignore either would be to misapprehend the prevailing sentiment.

"Vanity Fair" announces itself as a "novel without a hero,"—a phrase which may be taken in more senses than one. The story has no hero; it does not consist of the evolution of a little drama culminating in marriage, according to the ordinary type of the modern novel. Indeed, it may be said in this sense that Thackeray never wrote a novel. His view of life is too much transfused with irony. He cannot admit—as he remarks in the characteristic burlesque, "Rebecca and Rowena," that all is over when "Emilia is whisked off in the new travelling carriage by the side of the enraptured earl," or, for that matter, when Rowena pairs off with Ivanhoe. There are readers of novels who have been married, and who have discovered that "adventures, and pains, and pleasures, and taxes, and sunrisings and settings, and the business, and joys, and griefs of life, go on after, as before, the nuptial ceremony." The remark, though humorously made, represents his own practice. A marriage, indeed, comes at the end of "Vanity Fair," as at the end of "Pendennis" and the "Newcomes;" but our attention is not fixed in any absorbing degree upon the development of the courtship. Though Dobbin is rewarded with the hand of Amelia, the pair have reached middle life before that conclusion is reached, and we have been following with far more interest the development of other careers. The final marriage is a mere corollary or accidental appendage of the story, not the focus to which all interest converges. The love-making is a subsidiary affair, in short, and it is of the essence of his theory that it should be so. Lovers, and the writers of love-stories, must be in the frame of mind least receptive of the ironical view of life; they must take passion seriously, and put out of sight the possibility that even the attainment of their hopes may lead to a new illustration of the *Vanitas vanitatum*. The passion of love is

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the rose-coloured thread in the complex tissue of life; and one who chooses to show us the true composition of the web must reduce it to its true position of subordination. Amelia's destiny is determined, like that of most young ladies, by her love; but she has to find that marriage with a brilliant young officer is not of necessity the entrance to a permanent haven of rest.

But "Vanity Fair" is also without any character fitted to play the part of hero effectually. Dobbin has brains and a heart, though he is clumsy as to his boots, and his friends think themselves entitled to patronise his virtues on the strength of his slightly comic exterior. We learn to respect and to love him by the end of the story; but he is always in the position of an outsider. The couples at Vauxhall leave him to stroll about the walks and amuse himself by contemplating the "well-known pasteboard Solitary." He turns up when he is wanted; but he plays no part in the little drama which is enacted without his assistance. He is pretty much in the same attitude throughout the novel; he is in "Vanity Fair," but not of it; he watches the various actors, each absorbed in the struggles and amusements of the place; but for him the only interest is the old schoolfellow of whom he has made a hero, and afterwards the tender woman whom he longs to rescue from the heartless crowd amongst which she is being torn and trampled. Everyone else is carrying on intrigues, or is the object of intrigues, and interested actively and passively in the competition of vanity, ambition, and interest; he is a quiet looker-on, ready to come to the rescue at the call of one person; but otherwise standing aloof and apart. He has naturally the qualities required for the part which he is to play: he is tender and true to the core, generous, self-denying and conscientious; but he is too reticent and retiring to answer for a hero. He has just a touch of absurdity in order to mark his secondary position. He might come out as a hero like Havelock, or Wordsworth's Happy Warrior, if called upon to face some sudden stress of circumstance; but he is essentially fitted for domestic peace and quietness, and naturally gravitates towards obscurity.

Dobbin, in short, serves as the foil to throw into stronger

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relief the emptiness of the various ambitions by which the more active characters are impelled. In "Vanity Fair" itself the absence of the heroic is one of the essential conditions of the place. The manager of the performance looks at it—as he tells us in his preface—with a "feeling of profound melancholy. He sees eating, drinking, making love and jilting, laughing and the contrary, smoking, fighting, dancing, and fiddling," and he thinks that Vanity Fair is certainly not a "moral place, nor a merry one, though very noisy;" a hero had best keep outside of it altogether. You may say, if you please, that if "Vanity Fair" stands for the world at large, such a view implies a jaundiced eye. Undoubtedly Thackeray is resolved to show us the seamy side of the society in which we live. He is by no means given to admire all those idols before which the respectable world delights to worship. There is a significant plate at the end of the "Paris Sketch Book." He gives a plate containing His Majesty Louis XIV. in his kingly dignity, and by its side the "little shrivelled paunchy old man in a jacket and breeches," stripped of the wig, high-heeled shoes, and cloak bespangled with fleurs-de-lys, which are exhibited by his side. How much of the kingly dignity, as he asks in the spirit of "Sartor Resartus," belongs to the man, and how much to the wig? An analogous process makes short work of some popular superstitions. I have sometimes wished that Thackeray could have written a pendant to that famous "purple patch," in which Macaulay describes the impeachment of Warren Hastings in Westminster Hall. It is pleasant to see how heartily the historian throws himself into the spirit of the scene, how thoroughly he accepts the various bigwigs at their own valuation, and relishes all the pageantry and mouthing grandiloquence of British constitutional forms. It is fine enough in its way, but it verges terribly on the ridiculous. One would like some able hand to give us the other side, the petty realities that masked themselves under that splendid show, the absurd ignorance and partiality of the Lords and Commons who took upon themselves to be judges of matters which they understood as little as Sanscrit, the buncombe, and the pedantry, and the pettifoggery and frippery that lay on the surface, and the mean intrigues that were at

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work below. The treatment of the Battle of Waterloo in "Vanity Fair" is characteristic of Thackeray's view, as it is certainly one of the finest passages in the book. We may all remember what Victor Hugo has made of Waterloo in the "Misérables;" and have probably all oscillated between admiration at the marvellous energy of the rhetoric, and a disposition to laugh at the gigantic unreality of the whole performance. Any ordinary novelist would certainly have taken us under fire, and trusted to his imagination for a good exciting scene of blood and bullets, after the manner of Lever. I would not blame Lever's rollicking vigour, or Victor Hugo's magnificent audacity. They may each be excellent in their own way. But Thackeray was clearly right from his own point of view, in keeping the cannon of Waterloo well in the background, and leaving the details of Osborne's death to our imagination. It enabled him to give a most vivid picture of the humours of the Fair under circumstances adapted to bring out to the full its strange mixture of the mean, the ludicrous, and the pathetic; and incidentally to gratify his taste for showing the undercurrent of what is called history; the sorrows and sufferings which orthodox historians leave out of sight, or take for granted, to the lamentable exaggeration of the aspect of things in general. That they should do so is, perhaps, a necessity of the case; but it is well sometimes to have brought before us by a masterly hand that reaction of the great events upon innumerable little domestic histories, the thoughts of which may check some idle bluster and fill up significant blanks in our Coxes and Alisons.*

There is no reason for exclusiveness in such matters. One man is enthusiastic by temperament and loves to stimulate our patriotism or loyalty; another cannot shut his eyes to the meaner elements of all great movements, and the ugly side of many turns of thoughtless exultation. It is clearly not desirable that literary art should reflect only one temperament or confine itself to one aspect of life. So long as there is nothing

* Another very original treatment of the same subject—a good deal more in Thackeray's taste—is to be found, by the way, in Beyle's *Chartreuse de Parme*, where the enthusiastic hero manages to be riding about all day in the background of the battle, without being able to get the least general conception of what all the hurly-burly comes to.

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radically vulgar in the stimulus offered to our feelings or unappreciation of good impulses in the check administered to our pride, we may equally welcome an adequate expression of either conception of life. Wordsworth in the "Excursion" uses for another purpose a symbol which may be equally applicable here. One man, he says, looking at the mounds in a country churchyard sees nothing but snow, whilst another can see only the green grass. Each sees one part of the truth; but one is observing from the north, whilst the other is to the southern side. And so life inevitably turns its bleak side to a man whose natural or acquired temperament is melancholy, and he must paint it accordingly. If he does not deny the existence of other points of view, or adopt his own from a morose disposition, we have no cause for complaint. It requires no proof that "Vanity Fair" is the work of one deeply sensitive to the sadness of the world. The most prominent and successful personages are by no means such as edify the readers of tracts. The Crawley family and Miss Sharp and the Marquis of Steyne and the Osbornes, father and son, are incarnations in different forms of the genuine spirit of the Fair. Everyone is absorbed in the scramble for the good things of the show, and equally ready to use fair means or foul. It is certainly not a very attractive exhibition to people who like to believe that true social forces are all of the respectable kind. But Thackeray's satire does not imply indiscriminating wrath. His villains are not such as we meet in the "Mysteries of Paris," or in demonstrations of the corruption of a bloated aristocracy. They are, like Barry Lyndon, perfectly intelligible, and are by no means without amiable and ennobling qualities. The most abnormal personage is Sir Pitt Crawley, who certainly diverges so far from the ordinary type of English country gentlemen that one suspects him to be a portrait from the life. Even Sir Pitt has a little touch of the surviving spirit of a gentleman, as is shown in his reception of his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane; and it is made quite clear that he is to be regarded as an exceptional brute and not a type of the class to which he belongs. I never could get rid of a sneaking regard for the old gentleman, perhaps by reason of the contrast with his priggish

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successor; but he must, of course, be taken as an extreme specimen of the "humourist"—taking the word in its old-fashioned sense. Without dwelling at length upon the more prominent actors, it is worth while to notice briefly how each of them is shown to have a generous side. We come almost to love poor Rawdon Crawley—the hulking, stupid lifeguardsman. His affection for his son; his blundering expressions of remorse to Lady Jane when she releases him from the spunging-house; and the scene in which he strikes Lord Steyne to the ground and Rebecca admires him, "strong, brave, and victorious," are enough to justify us in keeping a little tenderness for him. Thackeray, it is said, confessed that, after writing that last passage, he felt it to be a stroke of genius; and I fancy that most readers will agree with him. There was the making of a man about poor Rawdon, and Becky's appreciation of his manliness is one of that young woman's characteristic points. She exemplifies a remark by which Thackeray seems to have been impressed. Moralists have disputed the degree of connection between moral and intellectual excellence. According to Thackeray, if one may judge from his work, there is clearly no such connection as to prevent a very clever man or woman from being consummately wicked. Becky and the Marquis of Steyne are sufficient proofs of the fact. But he also observes that a certain degree of intellectual power generally implies a kind of æsthetic appreciation of the advantages of virtue. A man of real ability is above the little tricks by which smaller villains keep up their self-conceit. When, to take a small example from "Pendennis," Steyne's hangers-on think to show their acuteness by poking fun at the old Major's affection for his nephew, Steyne is shrewd enough to see that it is genuine. The fool applies his little cynical maxims as if they were ultimate truths. The bad man of ability keeps them to use on occasion, but sees their hollowness when they are not required as masks. Charles II., as Johnson tells, liked to reward merit with such distinctions at least as cost him nothing; and Lord Steyne was prepared to admit fairly that there was such a thing as virtue, and to admire it "in the abstract," that is, when it did not hamper his own actions. He can tell Becky fairly enough—knowing quite well that she

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will not believe him—of the absurdity of her ambition, and assure her that a leg of boiled mutton may be better eating than the most sumptuous cookery in the Fair. But Becky herself shows this quality in the most striking manner. She is so buoyant, courageous, and unfailingly good-humoured that we could find it in our hearts to love her, were it not for her want of maternal affection. The wonder that a man should have made his most admitted success in painting a woman's character is partly diminished by the fact that there is really something masculine in our excellent Becky. She is without feminine tenderness, and her superlative self-denial is more allied to that of a male adventurer than to the ordinary feminine intriguer. The Marquis of Steyne is more impressed by her unfailing wit and flow of spirits than by the more commonplace charm of grace and beauty. Intellectually she can recognise genuine merits as well as anyone; and she plays her game in life without unnecessary bitterness. She admires Dobbin for a fair attack upon her credit, and even helps him to gain his reward. "If I could have such a husband as that!" she exclaims—"a man with a heart and brains, too!—I would not have minded his large feet." Unluckily she had chosen a different road to fortune; but those who have devoted most skill to playing the game sometimes know best the worthlessness of the prizes.

There is another remark of Becky's in the same vein, which has become more famous. "I think I could be a good woman if I had five thousand a year," she observes; "and who knows," asks her creator, "but Rebecca was right in her speculations, and that it was only a question of money and fortune which made the difference between her and an honest woman?" Becky would have been quite equal to that kind of virtue which is implied in thorough respectability and which reposes upon a solid foundation of "enlightened selfishness." Nay, she was clever enough, not only to see the advantage of the qualities which pass for virtues in the ordinary intercourse of "Vanity Fair," but even to feel considerable respect for the genuine article. And we may draw the moral, if we please, that circumstances make all the difference between the rogue who ends at Tyburn and the good apprentice

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who rises to be Lord Mayor. He would be a bold man who would deny the truth of that humiliating doctrine. But the sentiment which is most widely expressed in "Vanity Fair" is one generally regarded as more edifying. It is the conviction that in a world where a Marquis of Steyne is a green bay-tree, and where a Becky can distance an Amelia in public esteem, we must admit that success is often the worst punishment. The struggle is demoralising to all: to the noble, whose sycophants flatter his vices; and to the sycophants, who rise by their baseness; they have their reward; but it is one which can satisfy only the fool and the shallow-hearted; and in this perplexing farce of life, it is perhaps better to end as a broken-hearted bankrupt, like poor old Sedley, than to become a merchant-prince, like his blustering rival Osborne, or to retire with Amelia to Mrs. Clapp's lodgings, rather than to be admitted to Gaunt House with Mr. Rawdon Crawley.

People dispute as to the propriety of attaching any moral to a story. It seems to me that every story has inevitably a moral, though, often enough, it is not that which the novelist intends. A forcible picture of life must suggest many reflections as to the state of things which it represents. It cannot prove any more than a real narrative of facts that this or that series of events represents the normal course of affairs. We have no right to infer from "Vanity Fair" that a Becky will always or generally meet with the same measure of success, any more than we can infer that a bullet will always select an Osborne and spare a Dobbin. It asserts simply that a Becky is a possibility, and her career typical of the actual play of social forces. All great noblemen are not cynics or sensualists, any more than all clever governesses are given to immoral intrigues. It would be unfair, though it has been sometimes done, to interpret Thackeray by any such assumptions. But undoubtedly the picture would lose its force if we did not feel it to be taken from the life. It may be a view of the worst part of the Fair; but we must certainly assume that there are many booths over which a Becky presides, and that performers of her character may count upon having her chances. And undoubtedly this implies an indictment against the classes which frequent the Fair and support it by their

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custom. The heartlessness, the greed and selfishness of many highly respectable persons; the barrenness to which many lives are condemned by the social superstition which sanctions a false ideal of excellence; the worthlessness of much success, and the frequent failure of genuine manhood and womanhood to obtain recognition and room for free expansion in such a medium, are set forth by the artist as vigorously as if he were preaching from a pulpit. Thackeray, I fancy, never showed greater power of giving life and reality to his portraits than in "Vanity Fair." To some temperaments the melancholy becomes burdensome. They would like a more cheerful view of life, or a selection of pleasanter incidents. Others may not only admire the sheer force of the writing, but feel that the sadness is not unwholesome. It is as far removed from whining as from exultation, and is of that kind which accompanies a resolution to look facts in the face without exaggeration of lights and shades. A man who does that must see much that is painful and humiliating, but will not dwell upon it for the sake of effect. He will not be unfair even to the worldly or the selfish. His pathos is not maudlin or overdrawn, but indicates the intense tenderness which, after all, gives its real charm to the book—the more real because we feel that the writer is half afraid to give way to it, and is more apt to turn aside from painful scenes than to make fine writing out of them. He feels what a hardened novelist generally ceases to feel or only affects for dramatic purposes—that there are sorrows and sufferings over which it is best to draw a veil. We are glad to leave poor Amelia at Brussels to the motherly care of Mrs. O'Dowd, as we should draw back in real life because it would seem wrong to intrude upon such grief.

The sadness of "Vanity Fair" is much relieved in "Pendennis," "The Newcomes," and "Philip," which deal with similar themes, and embody the same conceptions of life and society. Much of the foregoing, however, will be equally applicable to them. In "Vanity Fair" the world and its worshippers occupy the foreground and thrust the simpler and purer characters aside, till the prospect becomes painful. In "Pendennis" the atmosphere is in a less oppressive state. It is the most impartial representation of the world as it is—

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a queer and intricate mixture of good and evil where we are not to expect edification from the spectacle of virtue triumphant, or a delicious horror from the opposite spectacle of virtue prostrate at the feet of vice. The characters in "Pendennis" do not deviate far from the average; they are perhaps weaker than those in "Vanity Fair." Blanche Amory is pale beside Becky Sharp, and Sir Francis Clavering is a far feebler scoundrel than Sir Pitt Crawley; but, on the other hand, Costigan and the Pendennises, uncle and nephew, and Warrington and Foker, are, I think, the most thoroughly real of any of Thackeray's characters. We seem to know them as we know our familiar friends; and undoubtedly Pendennis, in his early literary career, meets many people who must have been very familiar to his creator. Shandon must certainly have contributed to some prehistoric *Pall Mall Gazette*, in which Thackeray was more or less interested. Pendennis himself stands between his uncle on the one hand and Warrington and the ladies of Fairoaks on the other, to make his choice of Hercules. And yet, Major Pendennis is no unqualified representative of the evil principle. We get to like the battered old worldling as we see how strongly the spring of genuine affection flows in his padded old bosom for something not covered by his own wig. His precepts are not very edifying, but his conviction of his own merits and the approval of the best society amount to a kind of factitious conscience. Pendennis preaches his doctrine of selfishness and indifference with so much force in the conversation with Warrington, where he announces his intention of accepting Miss Amory and her fortune, that the warning of the merely dramatic nature of his sentiments is scarcely superfluous. Must we not admit that in a world, such as we see, there is truth on all sides; that bigotry is absurd, and that all enthusiasm is very like bigotry; that it is best to let things take their course, seeing how little we can alter them, and how likely it is that we shall take the wrong side; and that, on the whole, we may as well give up our little youthful romances and sell ourselves for the best price that we can fetch? Luckily for Pendennis, the treachery of Mr. Morgan reveals the true nature of the compact which is almost struck, and Pendennis

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escapes to a happier fate than some readers admit him to deserve. It is with such subtle sophistries that the world is apt to enchain such men as Pendennis—men of kindly nature, thoroughly honourable at the core, and incapable of yielding to the grosser temptations, but yet weak in proportion to their faculties of enjoyment, and rather too much inclined to take the goods the gods provide them—without examining the gifts too nicely. Warrington, who has received a fatal blow early in life, is a simpler and nobler character than his friend, and has preserved a kind of feminine purity which at times becomes intolerant and puritanical. Mrs. Pendennis and Laura can show the unamiable side of truly virtuous persons in a sufficiently uncompromising way; and if I may venture to admit the truth for once, I think that Mrs. Arthur Pendennis, especially as she shows herself in the part of chorus in later stories, becomes a decided nuisance. I cannot honestly say that I think her in all respects too good for her husband; and I have a strong suspicion that he must sometimes have thought her a fool. But opinions may fairly differ upon that point. Pendennis, we must admit, is a bit of a worldling, and probably remained so after he had settled down and become the husband of the model Laura and the father of her children. His defence, if he had made one, would probably be that he heartily recognised the superiority to himself of those loftier, if narrower, characters who could afford to condemn society unreservedly from a height above temptation, but that he also congratulated himself occasionally on the tolerance which enabled him to see some good even in poor old Costigan and the worldly Major. He had shaken off the cynicism which so nearly reconciled him to a degrading bondage; but it was perhaps but a perverted application of a judicious tolerance in which the virtuous are apt to be wanting. We should admit that there is good as well as evil even in this apparently heartless struggle, though we must resist the sophistry which would infer that good and evil are much the same. Pendennis revered his mother and Laura, and sincerely admitted the superiority of the generous recluse of Lamb Court, in the Temple. But he remains a man of the world after all; he can only admire from a certain distance

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those who have perhaps taken a better part; and be thankful if he is not stained too deeply by the evils of his class, and can still retain purity of thought and true tenderness of heart under an occasional mark of cynicism.

Colonel Newcome—generally regarded as the most pathetic and noble of Thackeray's characters—gives a special attraction to the third of these novels. I need not insist upon a charm which is too generally acknowledged to require demonstration. The Colonel represents the purely chivalric type of character, which is the precise antithesis of snobbishness; which can only admire what is really noble and admires it with a sure instinct whatever its surroundings. The misfortunes which break down the poor old gentleman at the end of his career are of course essential to the part. We should not feel its true pathos and beauty if he were not exposed to these trials, and deprived of everything except the love of all who knew him. The Colonel, indeed, owes his calamities to a fault which is only too much in character. He cannot believe in evil till it is forced upon him, and he then becomes intolerant in proportion to the greatness of the shock. His simplicity makes him the dupe of cheats; he mixes in affairs for which he is not qualified; and his loyalty makes the blows of ill-fortune tell upon him with double effect. The cruel old campaigner tortures him almost to death because she has a hold upon his most generous feelings. And here again we have in another form the same problem which is exemplified in Pendennis. Colonel Newcome is a most admirable and attractive character. We love him with all our hearts—as we love Parson Adams or Uncle Toby or the Vicar of Wakefield. But does not the very fact seem to show that virtue is something rather too good for this world? Does not Thackeray substantially preach that a very good man has too much of the dove and too little of the serpent for practical use; and that gentleness and simplicity and tenderness of heart are apt to generate a certain intolerance when he is somehow awakened to the harsh realities of life? Are they not, in short, qualities adapted for some imaginary Arcadia, which are rather out of place in Mayfair as in the neighbourhood of the Bank?

This, I fancy, is what was meant when Thackeray was

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called a cynic. He recurs to the subject once or twice in "Philip," and seems to have been hurt by the imputation and by the reported advice of some well-meaning mothers to daughters not to read his works lest they should imbibe "dangerous" notions. I cannot, as I have said, speak impartially in this matter, nor will I undertake to argue the case as an advocate. After all, the question must be, what impression do the books make upon you? No special pleading on either side will settle the point. But it is clearly desirable that the point at issue should be fairly understood. By a "cynic," when the word is used in its fullest condemnatory sense, is meant, as I understand, one who does not believe in virtue or who regards tender feeling as a fair object for ridicule. Anybody who should use the name in this sense of Thackeray would be altogether beyond my reach. His writings seem to be everywhere full of the tenderest sensibility, and to show that he valued tenderness, sympathy, and purity of nature, as none but a man of exceptional kindness of heart knows how to value them. In short, his writings mean, if they mean anything, that the love of a wife and child and friend is the one sacred element in our nature, of infinitely higher price than anything which can come into competition with it; and that Vanity Fair is what it is precisely because it stimulates the pursuit of objects frivolous and unsatisfying just so far as they imply indifference to these emotions. A warm and generous heart is the one great possession which alone gives any interest to the struggle of life. If he refrains from frequently drawing pathetic pictures, it is not because he feels too little, but too much. He fears to trust himself upon such tender ground. If that is not the impression made by Thackeray's writings upon any reader, I think that he had better not read them; but I am certain that I cannot agree with him. But beyond this lies a question of fact. A man may be called a cynic not as disbelieving in the value of virtue, but as disbelieving in its frequency. He may hold that the tender emotions have a smaller influence in actual affairs than easy-going people maintain, and that a purely virtuous person is a very rare phenomenon indeed. The sentimentalist is a man who exaggerates the accessibility of

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mankind at large to good feeling, and supposes that revolutions can be made with rosewater and villains converted by a few pretty speeches: as the cynic is (in this sense) a man who holds that, as a matter of fact, selfishness is the general rule even with people who profess and call themselves Christians, and that it is much too deeply inrgained and cunningly disguised to be overcome by superficial remedies.

To settle which picture of the world is accurate, whether pessimists or optimists are right, whether men are naturally good or naturally bad, is beyond the power of any man, whatever his pretensions. I will only point out that the darker view need not, though it perhaps may, arise from any want of apprehension of virtue. It may be due to a melancholy temperament, to hard experience, or to a simple desire to see facts without the ordinary masks of fine phrases. Many of the greatest reformers and most powerful preachers of the world have taken the darkest view of the actual facts of human nature. Taken in this sense, I can understand the opinion that Thackeray was cynical; and I can even share the view to some extent, though I should prefer to use the word "ironical." He looks at the world, not with a savage or misanthropical spirit, as the true cynic is supposed to do; nor with the passionate anger of a reformer, but with a half-tolerant contempt, with indignation at times, but with indignation toned down by humour, and therefore passing into irony. I do not think, as I have already said, that he believed very much in heroes. He was clearly no enthusiast by nature; he was always ready to ask whether the heroes of history had not a weak side, and to insist that it should be fully taken into account. And, further, I am clear that he had a very strong conviction indeed of the shallowness and heartlessness prevalent in the society which he described. If indeed he had simply denounced it by painting the devil as black as his colours would allow, he might not have been called cynical; it was his awkward determination to do justice even to the poor devil, and not to paint even his saints with rose-colour, which procured for him the unfavourable name. It is this impartiality which is unfairly interpreted into indifference. He always recognises the weak side of the more uncompromis-

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ing character. He saw and accordingly represented what we may call the impracticability of saints. He thought that they might be too rigid for the world in which we actually live, too apt to condemn it in a lump, too unforgiving, and too apt to resist the dispersion of their illusions; and that a simple-minded and honourable man like Colonel Newcome may have cause to regret that he ever mixed in affairs in which simplicity is not a sufficient armour. But we may draw the moral for ourselves. We may say that a world for which men like Dobbin or Warrington or Colonel Newcome are more or less unfitted in proportion to the nobility of their character is so far condemned and in want of thorough reform; or prefer with Pendennis to make the best of it, and mix in the Fair even at some risk to our own delicate sense of honour as well as to our pockets. The problem is a difficult one, as many people have found; and the man who would undertake any profession has often to solve many such scruples of conscience for himself. But, whatever the solution, there the problem is. The prizes offered by the world are not of the Monthyon kind—rewards for simple virtue; and we can neither join in the competition nor stand aside from it except at our peril. Only a saint can join in the struggle without being stained; and yet only a coward would keep altogether apart. The saint is too apt to preserve his purity by intolerance and one-sidedness; and most of us will find that our best heroism consists in judicious running away from temptation. Many women are good, perhaps because women have their nurseries for a refuge; but very few men have the finely-tempered nature which can resist effectually the corroding influences of the struggle. It is sad; life is sad to all who think; but we can make a tolerable world of it, if we do not expect too much, if we will be tolerant and kindly to the tempted and travel-stained amongst our fellow-pilgrims, and be careful above all to preserve the springs of tender domestic affection from all danger of defilement.

I have dwelt at some length upon these views, and, indeed, have very likely moralised too much, because I felt that after all the interest which we take in Thackeray's writings must depend chiefly upon the congeniality to our own temperaments

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of his teaching. As I am writing to those who are already familiar with them, I have insisted more (if I may say so) upon the nature of the soil than upon that of the harvest—upon the underlying sentiment everywhere implied than upon the characteristics of the literary art by which that sentiment is interpreted. A criticism which should deal with the last alone might be more interesting for many purposes, but would often fail to reveal to us the causes of our sympathy with or alienation from the author. We may read "Vanity Fair" and the rest simply for amusement or to admire their technical skill; but we shall make them part of the permanent domain of our fancy in proportion as we feel ourselves in harmony with their implicit teaching. This is not so true, however, of the books of which I must now speak briefly. Many critics have spoken of "Esmond" as the most perfect of Thackeray's performances. I shall not attempt to decide the question; but I think that the decision will turn chiefly upon the degree in which we are impressed by technical skill, by the general harmony of tone and proportion between the different parts of a work of literary art; or, on the other hand, by the vigour with which it embodies the strongest feelings and convictions of the writer. If you read in order to feel yourself in contact with the author's deepest nature, you will unhesitatingly prefer "Vanity Fair" to "Esmond." If you read chiefly to enjoy his style and to sympathise with the free play of his imagination, not consciously directed to any moral or social purpose, you may probably prefer "Esmond." If it has no passages of such intensity as its fellows, it is more harmonious and carefully constructed. The historical novel, it has been said, is equally mischievous as history and as fiction. The imaginative fire is quenched by the Dryasdust element, or reality is forgotten till we have at best a spirited but flimsy melodrama. "Esmond," however, is not an historical novel in the full sense, any more than Scott's "Old Mortality" or the "Heart of Midlothian." In them Scott is still painting the characters of the men and women known to him by personal experience, though transported to a period different enough from his own to have a certain halo of romance. He is not away amongst buff-jerkins or chain-mail moved by unsubstan-

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tial phantoms. And, in the same way, the actors in "Esmond" are so much of the same stuff with the persons of Thackeray's own circle that a wit of Queen Anne's time would only have to take off his wig and change a few cant phrases in order to pass perfectly well for a literary gentleman in the reign of Victoria. Addison would still be an inestimable contributor to the *Cornhill Magazine*, and the author of the "Roundabout Papers" turn his hand with perfect ease to the composition of an excellent *Spectator*. The difference, in short, is so far superficial that no great effort of imagination is required to revive sufficiently the motives and ambitions of his ancestors, though undoubtedly it required extraordinary skill and nicety of observation to revive the old style so perfectly. Mr. Lowell —a very competent judge—tells us that he once pointed out to Thackeray, as the sole modernism in "Esmond," the use of the phrase "different *to*" in place of "different *from*." Thackeray acknowledged the slip, but Mr. Lowell has since discovered authorities which would justify his use of the looser construction. To attain immunity from such errors implies, of course, close familiarity with the old models and great facility in adopting their forms of speech. But this and other such minutiæ, though they contribute to the general effect, are subordinate matters. They imply rather the kind of verbal skill which makes a man a clever parodist than any higher order of ability.

The restoration of Queen Anne modes of sentiment involves much more than this; though I may as well remark that there is one necessary qualification to the imitative closeness. "Esmond" is not (though critics sometimes speak as if it were) a book intended to produce an illusion. Nobody could for a moment mistake it for a genuine memoir as De Foe's sham histories were mistaken. We have necessarily to assume one gigantic anachronism. Nobody, and certainly not a reticent and proud man like Colonel Esmond, could have written an autobiography of that kind, with its elaborate though delicate portraiture of scenes and analysis of motive and long reports of conversation, in the days before Richardson and Fielding. A real Esmond would have put his history into a tenth part of the space, and not modelled it

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upon a plan afterwards worked out by novelists. He would have told us much more about Marlborough, and probably have omitted Beatrix altogether. This must, from the nature of the case, be taken for granted; but it is quite sufficient to dispel any illusion. The accuracy in language and accessories is not the less desirable from artistic considerations of harmony; but we are never really expected to forget that Esmond's pen was held by Thackeray.

The closeness of Thackeray's sympathy for the men of Esmond's time is characteristic. It is very needless to say that he did not cram for the occasion! Even when he wrote "Catherine" many years earlier, we see that he had been amusing himself by excursions into the records of one peculiar class of society. "Barry Lyndon" shows familiarity, again, with memoirs of the period, and other references are scattered through his books. The same course of study—desultory enough, I dare say—produced the lectures on the Georges and the English Humourists. The latter are the most interesting and significant for a very simple reason. They deal with some of the most eminent men of the day, instead of having for their texts four of their most stupid and narrow-minded contemporaries. Thackeray, it appears, has been blamed for intimating the obvious truth in regard to these royal personages. If an Englishman is not permitted to say that George III. was pig-headed and George IV. a worthless voluptuary, our liberties are limited indeed; and if the constitution depends in the least upon any such reticence, it must be in a more precarious state than the most ardent republican believes. But one may regret that he had not a better text. The other lectures have the interest which belongs to the judgment upon his brother-artists of a man of congenial eminence. They are generally good-natured and lenient estimates; though he has evidently some aversion for Swift and a very cordial dislike to Sterne. I think too that he feels Addison to be rather too excessively decorous to excite that love which Macaulay professed to entertain for him; and would be glad to find an excuse for promoting Steele to a higher share of honour. Kindliness and manliness are the qualities which attract him most, and he is rather more repelled than we might have sup-

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posed by the stern pessimism of Swift, which after all shows, as I think, a nature not fundamentally brutal, but soured by harsh experience. This may help us to an estimate of the critic; but I will at present only call attention to the charm which Thackeray clearly felt in the period which he described so well. It is characteristic, because the prevalent judgment in Thackeray's early days was that which had been passed by Coleridge and Wordsworth, and which is still popular in some classes.

The poor eighteenth century has been abused so heartily and persistently for its coldness, faithlessness, heartlessness, selfishness, for its scepticism in religion, its corruption in politics, its conventionalism in poetry, that it still sounds almost wrong to say a word in its behalf. To do so is to admit a sympathy with Hume, and Pope, and Voltaire, and to sympathise with them is to be a grovelling scoffer and cynic. I will not here give my reasons for the conviction (which I hold most sincerely) that all this vituperation represents a passing phase of thought, that it was based on the most superficial grounds, and requires to be summarily dismissed. The eighteenth century is beginning to be treated in a proper historical spirit, as marking one stage of development which, like other stages, had its weak side, but which most undoubtedly had also its good side. I believe that human nature then was almost identical with human nature now, and that quite as large a proportion of the population were probably leading sound, wholesome, rational lives. But—be this as it may—there is a charm for us about those Queen Anne days which Thackeray felt very strongly, and which is reflected in the pages of "Esmond." The romanticist will feel more at home in periods of stronger enthusiasm or more vehement sentiment; he will go back to the mediæval ages of faith; or to the multifarious energy of the Renaissance; or perhaps be taken by the stern heroism of Cromwell's Puritans. But the man who sees the weak side of heroes in general, and who thinks that your saint is too often a merciless bigot, who prefers the broad placid daylight of ordinary common sense to the splendour and glories of high-wrought imagination, will love the time when common sense was recognised as in all matters

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the supreme and ultimate arbiter; when literature, if less sublime in its aspirations, was more polished, more free from affectations, and showed a nicer adaptation of ends to means than has ever happened before or since. It was the period when comfort was beginning to be understood; and good solid red-brick houses rising in the place of the old castles battered by Cromwell's cannon; when pedantry was being laughed out of fashion; when priests were ceasing to point their arguments with the stake, and politicians reasoning by majorities and (it must be admitted) pecuniary considerations instead of the axe and block. Especially, we may say, there is a charm about the domestic life of the time. Addison and Steele were beginning to turn the tables upon the raffish courtier or town-wit of the Restoration period, whose blackguard code of morals (it is the only word) is represented by Congreve's brilliant but heartless comedy. Sir Roger de Coverley is not merely an inimitable creation of delicate humour, but a revelation of a new type characteristic of the period. He was, it is true, an old-fashioned gentleman even in the time of the *Spectator*; but he had been buried in the country and overshadowed by more splendid nobles. He was beginning to come to town, to be courted by ministers for his vote, and to mix with the wits at coffee-houses. There was formality enough to give picturesqueness to manner without infringing upon ease of intercourse. The governing classes in politics and literature could mingle as independent members of pleasant social circles. The Whig and Tory magnates rivalled each other in attention to Addison, and Swift, and Pope, and their literary friends. For a brief space there was a union on equal terms between the distinct spheres of active and intellectual life which could not last, but gives a unique character to the society of the time. To the mystic or the enthusiast, the period when Pope's poetry and the prose of Swift and Addison were regarded as the highest will always be objectionable. For the man of the world, who values quiet and common sense and solid domestic comfort, it will always have an attraction. It represents a calm between the more violent agitations of the preceding epoch and the ominous convulsions of that which has followed.

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"Esmond" is evidently the work of a man who has thoroughly imbued himself with the spirit of the time; who can reproduce the general atmosphere of society and has a perfect command of the means for effect which it places at his disposal. It would be easy to trace in the *Spectator*, the "State Trials," and contemporary memoirs, most of the materials turned to account; but they are so thoroughly assimilated that we have no impression of patchwork. Esmond is so placed as to be, as it were, just on the outskirts of the great contemporary movements. His cause is bound up in the political struggles of the time; but they are not introduced so as to produce an unpleasant trial of that kind of faith which we attach to imaginary history. Esmond himself is so thoroughly a man of the time, and yet so obviously related to Pendennis, as to explain in some degree the congeniality of their common creator with the earlier period. Like Pendennis, and like his grandson George in the "Virginians," he is rather an ambiguous politician. His intellect seems to be Whig, though he takes part with the Jacobites as Warrington takes the English side in America under George the Third. In fact he is a good deal of a sceptic; he has an amiable habit of seeing that there is good on both sides; and his view of the great Whig idol, Marlborough, showed him very strongly the reverse side of hero worship. Perhaps he was not the less fitted for a period in which the great hero of the day took care to keep a place of repentance in case of accidents. Good people are apt to be puzzled with the sceptical or ironical frame of mind which prevents them from understanding whether its possessor is in earnest or speaking sarcastically; and we may note that the same puzzle occurs to the friends of Warrington, of Pendennis, and of the author of the "Snob Papers." A broad laugh is intelligible; but what is meant by a smile, and a smile of which the world at large or the smiler's own convictions, or even his own self, is the object? Esmond, anyhow, passes through the various intricacies of his career with this rather ambiguous expression, and finds some food for irony in the men whom he most admires, in the cause for which he fights, and even in the passions by which he is governed. He is not the less fitted to represent his

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period though disqualified for some kinds of success, and doomed to remain rather a riddle to blinder understandings. There is, however, one, if only one, object which never suggests to him an irreverent thought. He worships the two women of the story with undeviating ardour, though one passion disappears and the other changes after a fashion which (if I may venture to hint at a blemish) is the least agreeable part of the story. This loyalty, however, may reconcile to Esmond those who do not feel him quite congenial in other respects. In fact, the main charm of the novel is in the little family circle to which the campaigns of Marlborough and the intrigues of the Jacobites are made to serve as background. There is little in the way of deliberate descriptive writing—a style of composition for which Esmond would have felt the contempt expressed by Mr. Pope. The touches are sparing as they are effective, yet we can distinctly see the old Castlewood mansion at which Sir Roger de Coverley might have paid his respects at any moment; the priests' corner; the hall where Dick Steele hiccupped out sermons and swore as long as he could keep on his legs that he would die for his religion, and Lord Castlewood played dice and discussed dogs and horses with the Will Wimbles of the neighbourhood; and the court with its old sun-dial and fountain and snuffling dogs, where he took an ominous farewell of the splendid scoundrel Mohun. All this serves as an effective setting for portraits of the two women, Rachel and Beatrix, who supply the central interest of the story. They are so thoroughly a part of the whole that we may doubt whether they owe most to their surroundings or the surroundings to them. They might, perhaps, have been presented in a different costume; but the Queen Anne atmosphere seems to suit them so accurately that in the cant language of modern times we doubt whether the organism or the environment is the determining condition of the other. The whole is so much of a piece that we cannot distinguish between the accident and the essence. Of course there are Rachels and Beatrixes at all times; Ethel Newcome, for example, has a strong dash of Beatrix, and we see that Beatrix has already the characteristics which in her old age gave her a family resemblance to old Miss Crawley. So

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we cannot deny a likeness between Rachel and the elder Mrs. Pendennis. Other differences enough could be suggested if it were worth while to attempt a more elaborate analysis. But the earlier characters seem to have developed under an atmosphere more congenial and more adapted to bring out the character. At any rate Rachel Esmond is probably Thackeray's most lifelike presentation of a feminine character. I have ventured already to suggest that no man—whatever his genius—can really draw a woman as a woman can draw her own sex. The reverse is, I think, equally true; but I do not infer that there should be an absolute separation of sexes in novels—a regulation which would have obvious difficulties in practice. Still the women even of the greatest writers—even the women of Shakspeare, or Goethe, or Scott—seem to me, when we look closely, to be drawn from the outside. We can always detect symptoms of the inevitable conclusion that they represent rather a process of inference than of direct insight. It is of course very easy to put a man in petticoats, or to speak of a thorough woman as "he," and this is enough to delude a hasty reader. But the fact, I think, remains, and it certainly appears to be illustrated in the case of Lady Castlewood. We always see what Esmond saw of her. There are, so to speak, gaps in the description—regions in her character which puzzled the male observer and which could only have been quite cleared up by herself. Esmond is struck, as the masculine mind is apt to be struck in its contemplation of good women, by the tendency to a rather excessive severity of judgment of the wicked, and by a sense of jealousy which she conceals indeed from herself more skilfully than from her companions; and he describes these qualities with admirable acuteness. Though a devoted lover, he is not one of those lovers who can be permanently blinded to the weakness of his idol. I do not mean, therefore, to say that the character is not thoroughly lifelike; but that it is a lifelike portrait by a masculine hand and one which always tells us even more of the observer than of the observed. We see her qualities as they affected Esmond's life and thought, and nothing but a description from within would have laid the stress upon different qualities, revealed some secrets and

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filled up some blanks at which we can only guess. Still we want to see not only the woman herself but the male ideal of woman; and Rachel and Beatrix, both in their strength and their weakness, are vivid presentations of the idol—real or imaginary—which is worshipped in such shrines as the bosom of Colonel Esmond. The image of Beatrix is shattered once for all when her intrinsic worldliness is revealed; but we can understand his persistent worship of Rachel, pure, noble, capable of unflinching self-sacrifice, with a wisdom more of the heart than the head, and just enough intolerance, jealousy, and power of dissimulation, to be thoroughly feminine. But an attempt at analysis is so feeble beside the living reality that I will not attempt to go further.

And here I may venture a few remarks upon a point interesting not only to collectors of autographs, but to Thackeray's fellow-craftsmen. The complete manuscript of "Esmond" has fortunately been preserved. It is, I think, the first manuscript which was thought worthy of so much care; though the first few chapters of "Vanity Fair" and some fragments of earlier work are still in existence. Thackeray wrote, as may be seen from the *facsimile* which accompanies this essay, a remarkably neat and legible, though a very minute hand. It is one of those hands which evidently give a kind of artistic pleasure to the author himself, and which are welcomed with delight by editors and compositors. The critic will be more interested in observing the remarkable absence of corrections. Page after page of "Esmond" has scarcely a single erasure. A considerable part of it was dictated, and there, too, he seems to have set down at once what was to stand as the final result. The impression made is that he must have thought out every phrase completely before setting it down upon paper. The uniformity and perfect formation of all the letters show that the actual writing can never have been hurried, although many of the manuscripts which I have seen must have been written under pressure of time. Thackeray's authority may evidently be claimed by those who maintain that the true method of writing is to compose every sentence completely before writing it down, and so to obviate the necessity of frequent remodelling. The case of "Esmond," which cer-

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Pavilion. Folkestone
Wednesday. 7 Sept.

My dear Smith

I only finished my number at 2 o'clock this m.
and now D.V. propose to do nothing till the end of the month.
I will be in London D.V. on Monday m. October 3. If you
want me on Saturday 1, a letter will find me at Bordeaux
Poste Restante.

Sir H. Rawlinson has promised me some short papers: & Charles
Dana one or two upon the Old Actors and Talma & Mars during
the Army of Occupation in France. Hannay might do a set
of Salt-water heroes. Collingwood. Van Tromp. Jean Bart, a
Buccaneer or so. If he will do them as well as that noble paper
in the Quarterly, and I think he will for an old friend. As I
think of the editing business I like it. But the Magazine must
bear my cachet you see & be a man of the world magazine.
a little cut of Temple Bar, or the Charles I on the Or-

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We will have Parton talk October 3. I am surprised I have finished the Virginians so well - O what a load it off my mind!

Never mind, we will lay another on soon.

Always yours

W M Thackeray.

G. Smith Esq

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Dec. 16 + + + +

Going to the Printer's to revise the last pages, I walk by closed shutters; by multitudes already dressed in black; through a city in mourning. among the widows deploring the dearest and best beloved, among the children who are fatherless, it has pleased Heaven to number the Queen and her family; and the millions who knelt in our churches yesterday in supplication before the only Ruler of Princes had to omit a name which for [illegible] years has been familiar to their prayers. Wise, just, moderate, admirably pure of life, the friend of Science, of freedom, of peace and all peaceful arts, the Consort of the Queen passed from our troubled sphere to that serene one where justice & peace reign eternal. At a moment of awful doubt, if may be, and danger, Heaven calls away from the Wife's, the Sovereign's side, her dearest friend and Councillor. But he leaves that throne to its widowed mistress to the loving guardianship of a great people whose affectionate respect for her life has long since crowned it; whose best sympathies attend her grief; and whose best strength and love and loyalty will defend her honour.

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tainly shows his highest technical merits in point of literary style, is remarkable; though authors of a different temperament may still find arguments for putting the final polish to work already visible to the material as well as the mental eye. I may add that I have found only one case in which Thackeray seems to have done much in the way of rewriting. The copy of the first few chapters of "Vanity Fair" has fortunately been preserved; and shows that he must have rewritten more than once the little burlesques of various styles of novel-writing in the first part of Chapter VI. The passage which seems to have given so much trouble was almost entirely expunged in later editions; probably because the satire seemed to be too ephemeral in a work which was showing that it had in it some seeds of vitality. I may say, too, that the remainder of the manuscript shows rather more alteration than his later writings: his hand was not quite so sure. It illustrates a little failing by which he was occasionally troubled—the propensity to write wrong names—to substitute Osborne for Sedley and *vice versâ*.

I need not pursue my survey of Thackeray's chief works any further. The "Virginians" is in some sort a continuation of "Esmond;" and "Philip," though not a continuation of "Pendennis," is virtually a treatment of the same theme. I have therefore said by anticipation all that I should wish to say of their general spirit without entering upon criticism of a more detailed kind. It is pleasant to think that the mellowed sadness of "Esmond" and the pathetic grace of the "Newcomes" succeeded the sterner sentiment of "Vanity Fair" and the keen irony of "Pendennis." The burden of life was not, we may hope, pressing so heavily upon the writer. Perhaps, however, the softened feeling was less favourable to productiveness. In the last thirteen years of Thackeray's life he had not the same external pressure; for his position had been definitely established by "Vanity Fair" in the front rank of contemporary authors. His activity was to some extent interrupted by the two lecturing tours in America, and frequent attacks of illness must have considerably taxed his energy. He was never one of those fortunate persons who can turn out "copy" with the regularity of a printing-press,

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and he required some immediate stimulus to impel him to work. A happy domestic life was again developing itself for him; and perhaps the incomplete "Denis Duval" would have given us a harmonious picture worthy to be put beside "Esmond," and more cheerful in tone. I think that it promised to be one of his best works. But it was not to be; he died suddenly and peacefully, December 23rd, 1863, at an age when imaginative minds have generally lost much of their early fire, but have often gained a more than compensating advantage in increased technical skill and riper and wider views of life.

To speculate upon the might-have-been is idle; but I have still to say a word or two upon work actually accomplished, though of less ambitious aim. The humourist, as he remarks in his Lectures, is not a mere compeller of laughter. He professes to "awaken and direct your love, your pity, your kindness—your scorn for untruth, pretension, imposture—your tenderness for the weak, the poor, the oppressed, the unhappy." I have tried to show how Thackeray discharged that function in his greater books: but it is also true that there are times when every true humourist ceases to be the "week-day preacher," and indulges according to his nature in fun, or buffoonery, or playfulness, casting aside solemn thoughts and abandoning himself to the impulse of the moment. I do not think that any of the writings which Thackeray chose to preserve descend quite to the level of buffoonery, except perhaps the earliest of the collected edition, the "Tremendous Adventures of Major Gahagan," a purely grotesque caricature (we may suppose) of one of the eccentric adventurers who were more or less familiar in the circle of the Chevalier Strong and Altamont, *alias* Amory. But there are plenty of writings in which the pure spirit of fun has the upper hand, though, as he continues, the fun passes into the higher form, which we should more properly call playfulness. Perhaps the most characteristic are the burlesques, the model novels, the "Legend of the Rhine," and "Rebecca and Rowena," in which he has his laugh at his favourites Scott and Dumas, as well as at some of his contemporary writers. A parody is, generally speaking, a compliment to the original, though the receiver of

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the compliment does not always value it as highly as he ought. Nor do I think that the authors then known as Mr. Disraeli and Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton could be blamed if they regarded their imitator as rather a sharp critic than a friend in disguise. Burlesque came as naturally to Thackeray as the mock-heroic to Fielding. To analyse his impressions as a prosaic critic was not his method, though he had a certain leaning to art-criticism, as is shown by his papers on Cruikshank and Leech, and in many passages of his books. But burlesque is a kind of criticism which is not the less effective because it is indirect; and it would be easy enough to conjecture Thackeray's serious opinions of the authors whom he caricatured from these ludicrous imitations. Compare, for example, Thackeray's version of Cœur-de-Lion with Scott's "Knight of the fetterlock," and you can see as plainly as if he had written it down in black and white what he thought of the romantic business. No man, to paraphrase Johnson, is a hypocrite in his laughter, and when you know what strikes him as absurd, you know a great deal as to his general sentiments. But it would be unfair to both critic and criticised to read the burlesques in this fashion, whatever reflections may be afterwards extracted from them. They are primarily amusing, and the test of their success is the degree in which they make you laugh. The most successful of all the books which may be classed amongst burlesques is, I suspect, the "Rose and the Ring." Written to amuse a child, it ought to be read in the childish spirit; and yet one cannot read it, I fancy, without having in one's mind the thoughtful and kindly face of the writer,—than whom no one ever loved children better,—as well as the eager delight of his audience. The drawings, I think, which illustrate it, and which appear to have been the nucleus of the whole, are amongst his happiest; and show, like innumerable vignettes scattered through his books, how tenderly sensitive he was to the beauty of childhood. They are not the less touching because little Betsinda-Rosalba is contrasted with the broad farce of Valoroso and Gruffanuff. And I must venture the confession that Prince Bulbo—with all the undeniable weaknesses of which that young gentleman can be fairly accused—is one of my favourite

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heroes of fiction. He is not beautiful, but I am sure that he was good.

The sentiment, varying from pretty sharp satire to unmixed playfulness, which is to be found in the burlesques, animates also the last class of writings of which I must speak. The "Roundabout Papers" are ostensibly mere trifling; and perhaps to the inexperienced reader they have the air of being perfectly easy. You have nothing to do but to sit down after dinner, fold your legs comfortably, and talk easily and gracefully about any topic that turns up, to indulge in a little harmless fun, a complaint about servants or the woes of an editor, or a generous word for some old friend, or a bit of gossip about childish memories, just as one topic or the other happens to come uppermost. I need not tell anyone who is not inexperienced of the extreme difficulty of such a performance or the rarity of any tolerable success. The "Roundabout Papers" have so much special Thackeray flavour that one cannot well compare them with any closeness with the "Essays of Elia" or Hazlitt's "Table-talk," or other specimens of the voluminous literature which has grown up since Montaigne first gave popularity to this form of art. They belong, of course, to the lightest variety of their species, and cover none of the profound reflections on philosophy or life which have sometimes been hidden in similar work. The degree in which they are felt to be charming will vary with individual taste; but no competent reader can amuse himself with them in an occasional leisure hour without recognising the skill of the writer's hand and the felicity with which he converts the merest trifle into a topic for pleasing meditation. Nothing, if one may judge from experience, is more difficult than to trifle gracefully without being flippant or vulgar or grotesque. The talents of composing such essays and of writing really good drawing-room verses are almost as rare as the talents required for metaphysical speculation or for epic poetry and tragedy; though, of course, they are very far indeed from having the same intrinsic value. And, finally, the mention of poetry suggests that, in this department too, Thackeray had a power which often suggests a regret that it was not more fully exercised. His poetry was evidently regarded by himself

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as an amusement, and he did not value the results sufficiently to labour after any high polish or to attempt any exalted task. Such trifles as the "Ballads of Policeman X" and the "Lyra Hibernica" are curious proofs of his mastery over the cockney and Irish dialects—to say nothing of their intrinsic fun. We are amused by them as we should be amused by some eminent painter drawing caricatures with a bit of charcoal on a white-washed wall, and showing his singular facility of hand as distinctly as in his most serious work, though for a humbler purpose of momentary amusement. Mere facility of versification and dexterity in manipulating quaint slang dialects are of course no proof of high poetic power. Nor was Thackeray's success in more serious attempts of such a kind as to suggest that he was deserting his natural vocation in making so little use of the poetic form. He has written half-a-dozen songs, and one ballad of considerable length which will, I think, be remembered much longer than much poetry of higher aims and reputation. But they are the kind of work which cannot be made to order. They were products of an occasional inspiration, and he would have been wrong to force a vein, the charm of which depends in great measure upon the obvious spontaneity of the thought. They certainly give the impression of being comparatively slight efforts of a man who had a great reserve of power; but the power thus indicated was actually expended in a different direction, and there is, I think, every presumption that it was expended in the direction most congenial to his talent. The "Chronicle of the Drum," originally written in 1841, contains some of those ringing and hard-hitting stanzas which are appropriate to the style adopted; they have stuck to my memory since I read it first, with a persistency which convinces me at least of their picturesque power. The old drummer telling his old tales on the sunshiny bench of the tavern, warming his old blood with memories of victories and defeats and revolutionary triumphs, is as vividly drawn as Wilkie's or Mr. Herkomer's Chelsea Pensioners. The dramatic force is often quite admirable; as in the stanzas which describe the Reign of Terror, and the son of Saint Louis silenced at the bidding of Santerre by a tap of the old ruffian's drum; if ruffian be not too harsh a word for a mere bit of

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military machinery. But, though I love the "Chronicle," it seems to me that, though the easy-going verse is a very fit vehicle for the rough-and-ready eloquence of the drummer, the more serious treatment of the same theme would require rather prose than poetry. The drummer would fit into one of MM. Erckmann-Chatrian's novels, and scarcely ventures further than the outskirts of poetry. To compare small things with great, one feels, in reading the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," that though William of Deloraine—whose morality was pretty much that of the drummer and his Emperor applied on a large scale—is a delightful portrait, his creator could express himself to still better purpose in prose; and so I think that the "Chronicle"—excellent in itself—is more suggestive of the future novelist than of an incomplete poet.

The short lyrical pieces which we remember in Thackeray's poetry are perhaps suggestive of something more: at least of a wish that they could have received a little higher polish. And yet, though apparently thrown off without very much care, they hit the mark so easily and gracefully that we are well content as they stand. The ballad of "Bouillabaisse" and the "Cane-bottomed Chair," the little song "At the Church Gate," originally published in "Pendennis," the "End of the Play," and the "Vanitas Vanitatum," do not profess to go very deep; they are half humorous as well as tender; but they seem to have in them so complete an infusion of the author's characteristic mood, that they affect me at least more than the more exquisite performances of recognised poets. There is the same kind of charm as in Lamb's "Old Familiar Faces," and in some other poems which appear to be all the more genuine because they have a certain stamp as of amateur work. The carelessness seems appropriate to the sincerity of feeling. Certainly, one could not express the doctrine which he has expounded so often more pithily than in the comment on the *vanitas vanitatum*:—

> "Though thrice a thousand years are past,
> Since David's son, the sad and splendid,
> The weary King Ecclesiast,
> Upon his awful tablets penned it,—

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"Methinks the text is never stale,
And life is every day renewing
Fresh comments on the old old tale
Of Folly, Fortune, Glory, Ruin.

"Hark to the Preacher, preaching still,
He lifts his voice and cries his sermon,
Here at St. Peter's of Cornhill,
As yonder on the Mount of Hermon:

"For you and me to heart to take
(O dear beloved brother readers)
To-day, as when the good King spake,
Beneath the solemn Syrian cedars."

I have said all that seems fitting for me to say within the limits which I have laid down. I do not wish to sum up the general impression which will be made upon the student of Thackeray's works. Reputations are quick to fade; contemporaries are bad judges; and any estimate which I framed—even if I could frame one to my own satisfaction—would be likely enough to appear beside the mark to readers of the present day, and go out of fashion before the ink was well dry. Nor should I care, were it possible, to persuade anyone to share my views, whatever they might be; for appreciation of an author which is not perfectly spontaneous is for the most part of very little value. I have tried to show by what qualities Thackeray had a hold upon some at least of his readers; but I am fully conscious that my exposition is in many respects very defective, and that I have not been able to give an adequate account even of my own impressions. I can only hope that in whatever else I may have come short, I have not failed to show that his admirers honoured in him—as I think that they were not deceived in recognising—a nature full of tender emotion, of reverence for all simplicity, and true nobility of character, and of unflinching resolution to see facts as they really are. So much is implied; and such qualities may justify an affectionate pride in the man, whatever estimate we may accept of the literary genius of the writer.

LESLIE STEPHEN.

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LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
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